The Representation of Migrants in Contemporary Spanish Cinema

Guillén Marín, Clara

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Clara Guillén Marín

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Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies

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Abstract

This study will focus on the analysis of eight films representing migrants in Spain. The films are documentaries and fiction films made by Spanish and non-Spanish filmmakers from 1999 till 2010.

The main focus of this analysis is to explore the ways in which migrant and non-migrant filmmakers reframe the urban and rural space to create opportunities for a free, although contested, exchange between marginal voices and mainstream Spanish society. I will analyse to what extent the films challenge forms of exclusion, exploring how they represent ethnicity in a space that includes some and excludes others. It is my main aim to describe how and to what extent the films open the space for political argumentation.

My main theoretical framework will derive from the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière to demonstrate to what extent the films create scenes of dissensus. I will also draw upon Hamid Naficy's characterisation of 'accented cinema', as well as upon theorists like Doreen Massey, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, since their arguments will help the analysis of how the films represent space, time, power and movement.

Apart from this, I will make use of Laura Marks's theories on intercultural cinema made by the diasporic filmmaker and its capacity to create new kinds of sense knowledges through haptic perception. Other political theories from Giorgio Agamben, Fredric Jameson and Thomas Elsaesser, among others, will contribute to exploring how migrant characters are portrayed and to what extent this representation contributes to the creation of scenes of dissensus.

1. General Introduction

During the last two decades Spain has undergone an unprecedented transformation from being a country of emigrants to receiving a significant number of migrants from all around the world, especially from various countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. This extensive influx of economic migration has had a great impact in Spanish society and has also become the main theme of numerous cultural productions in the country. Spanish filmmakers especially have shown a great interest in the subject, creating numerous films devoted to representing this new social reality.

The main focus of this study is to explore the ways in which migrant and non-migrant filmmakers reframe the urban and rural space to create opportunities for a free, although contested, exchange between marginal voices and mainstream Spanish society. I will analyse to what extent the films challenge forms of exclusion and represent ethnicity in a space that includes some and excludes others. It is my main aim to describe how and to what extent the films open the space for political argumentation.

The main theoretical framework derives from the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière to demonstrate to what extent the films create scenes of dissensus. I will also draw upon Hamid Naficy's characterisation of accented cinema, as well as upon theorists like Doreen Massey, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre, since their arguments will help the analysis of how the films represent space, time, power and movement.

I will also consider Laura Marks's theories on intercultural cinema made by diasporic filmmakers and its capacity to create new kinds of sense knowledges through haptic perception. Other political theories from Giorgio Agamben, Fredric Jameson and film theorists like Thomas Elsaesser, Richard Dyer or Robert Stam, among others, will contribute to the exploration of the way migrant characters are portrayed and to what extent these representations contribute to the creation of scenes of dissensus. I will also explore documentary film theory, with an analysis of how self-reflexivity adds to the creation of the intended inclusive space.

This study will embed in-depth and original analyses of films from the past eleven years within a broader understanding of cultural histories, specifically the history of cinema in Spain, where domestic migration has been an important theme since the 1930s. I have chosen four documentaries and four fiction films directed by male and female filmmakers of both national and foreign origin. With documentaries, the relationship between fiction and reality may be rendered in such a way that new ways of presenting and understanding the space can help to open up new possibilities.

There is a need to investigate what constitutes the beginnings of the Spanish migration cinema made by Spanish directors, but also to examine those made by first generation migrants within the same context. Exploring these films under this theoretical as well as spatial and temporal framework will provide an original analysis of Spanish migration cinema from a period of time when the Spanish economy was booming up to the beginning of the financial crisis. Therefore the study of these films will also reflect on the socio-economical changes taking place in the

country, and on how and to what extent these changes have an impact on the representation of migrants and locals in the films.

This study is also made relevant not only by the rapid growth of immigration in Spain during the period in question, but also by the fact that Spanish cinema has increasingly been casting female rather than male migrants as the main characters. What makes this study distinctive is its focus on both female and male migrant representations, its analysis of the power relations depicted between locals and migrants and the role played by the filmmakers, some Spaniards and some foreigners, as creators of the films. Furthermore the originality of this study lies not only in the corpus of films, which comprises a period of time where there have been deep and massive socio-economical changes, but also in the theories that are being applied. The theoretical framework is based on a varied and multidisciplinary body of works that include political philosophy, cultural geography, and feminism.

Most of these theories intertwine with each other and offer the possibility of exploring the filmic works from a new perspective. This thesis provides a relevant and original theoretical framework from which to investigate how the films construct and/or deconstruct power relations, and how they contest and disrupt our sensory experiences, our certainties and our expectations in order to create scenes of dissensus, what Rancière calls 'the thwarting of hierarchical configurations of power' (2010).

I will analyse and compare four fiction and four documentary films made by Spanish and non-Spanish filmmakers in order to explore to what extent the films allow migrants to become characters with a place and a voice of their own, asking what the mechanisms are that work better to create scenes of dissensus in the films, thus helping to include the characters as full political subjects, independently of their gender, social status, their functionalities or their countries of origin.

All eight films are very different from each other. The originality of the thesis stems from their representation of places of origin as well as of arrival. Furthermore, there are documentary works by female as well as by male directors, two of them migrants and two of them Spanish nationals. The reason behind this choice of documentary works has been to offer a selection where ethnic origin, nationality and gender of the filmmakers would be balanced, as well as the places which the films were portraying: *En construcción/Under Construction* (Guerín, 2001) and *Si nos dejan*/*If They Let Us* (Torres, 2004) represent marginal areas of Barcelona, while *Extranjeras*/*Foreigners* (Taberna, 2003) and *El otro lado…un acercamiento a Lavapiés/The other side…an approach to Lavapiés* (Ramsis, 2002) depict the multiculturality of Lavapiés in Madrid. In this way, we can observe the same space through different perspectives, not only from the ethnic origin of the directors, but also from a gender point of view.

With regard to the fiction films chosen for this study, there are also four films: *Flores de otro mundo/Flowers from another World* (Bollaín, 1999); *Agua con sal*/*Salted Water*, (Pérez Rosado, 2005); *Retorno a Hansala*/*Return to Hansala*, (Gutiérrez, 2008) and *Biutiful,* (Iñarritu, 2010). These films belong to very different periods in Spanish history. I will start from the period with a higher volume of female migration during the boom of the Spanish economy, with the subsequent rise of migrants arriving in the country, and up to the beginning of the economic

crisis. Two of these films are directed by Spanish female directors: Bollaín and Gutiérrez. Both of them take the rural as a site in which to represent migrants, rural Spain the former and rural Morocco the latter. The other two fiction films are works by Spanish male director Pedro Pérez-Rosado, and the internationally recognised Mexican filmmaker Alejandro González Iñarritu. Pérez-Rosado sets the story in a Valencian town and Iñarritu shows a Barcelona that has very little to do with the model and tourist city that can be seen in other cinematic representations.

Although some of the works have been chosen for the little recognition they have had so far in the public and academic arena, there are others that have been included despite having received more attention, such as in the cases of *En construcción*, *Flores* and *Biutiful.* Various reasons lie behind these choices; *En construcción* entails a poignant example of how a film and a building become at the same time the subject and the object of resistance through cinema; *Flores* is the first film in Spain portraying Caribbean female migrants in a Spanish rural setting; and *Biutiful* is a significant example of the beginnings of post-migration cinema in Spain, as it exposes how not only migrants but also locals are excluded in the globalized and fragmented city of Barcelona.

The rationale behind this choice of analyzing both documentary and fiction films rests on the idea that they are two very different vehicles of transmission of images and ideas. Documentary takes the real as a starting point so the real can be more easily contested and new ways of representation can develop. This is even more so for being itself a marginal medium of representation compared to fiction film stories, which are traditionally devoted to more stereotyped themes and characters. Nevertheless, although documentaries are traditionally considered 'realer' in showing factual images rather than invented ones, and in this sense they could have more capacity to stage dissensual and politically disruptive images, there are issues at stake which are also problematic in the representation of marginal identities. Patricia Aufderheide states that the documentary genre in film 'makes distinctive claims to honesty and truth', and although filmmakers do recognize that all expression is not a simple mirror of reality, 'the form is defined by its claim to say something honestly about something that really happened' (2012: 362).

Steve Thomas points out in his article about ethics in documentary filmmaking that a central problem for documentary is the power imbalance between the filmmaker and the participant, 'as many social documentaries feature vulnerable or "powerless" people' (2012: 333). Thomas explains that those areas of common law that impinge most on documentary filmmaking - 'those of consent, copyright, and the public's right to know invariably work to the benefit of the filmmaker rather than the participant' (2012: 333). Therefore, and as Winston writes (1995: 240, 258), the only way to avoid the victimization of the participant is for the filmmaker to become a facilitator of the participant's self-advocacy, 'trust' being the key point in the relationship between filmmaker and participant (Cited in Thomas 2012: 333). This, I believe, is also true as far as fiction films are concerned in the cases where migrants perform as actors, whether professional actors or not; there is an important responsibility on the part of the filmmaker, as this involves a portrayal that can potentially have an impact on how national audiences recognize and understand the experiences of migrants in Spain.

We need to think of new ways in which films can contest our sensory experiences, and therefore my aim is to analyse and compare fiction and documentary films made by Spanish and non-

Spanish filmmakers in order to explore to what extent the films allow the migrants to become characters with a place and a voice of their own, asking what the mechanisms are that work better to create scenes of dissensus (in Rancière's terms) in the films, thus helping to include the characters as full political subjects.

2. Literature on Migration Cinema

Unlike other European countries with a long history of immigration like France, Germany and Britain, it was only in the last two decades that Spain underwent a transformation from being a nation of emigrants to becoming a country receiving migrants from various countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. Therefore, Spanish migration cinema still differs in many ways from the cinema from these other European countries. For example, in Spain, a cinema made by or about second-generation migrants is still in its beginnings, with Santiago Zannou as the most, or rather, only recognized second-generation filmmaker at the moment in Spanish cinema.

The works exploring these migration films have then focused mainly on two areas: on the one hand, some of the works have looked at how the representation of the migrants affects the assimilation and adaptation in the host country and its impact on Spanish national identity, and on the other, they have explored gender issues, particularly with an analysis of female otherness, the representations of racial masculinities and intersections of gender and ethnicity.

As far as French and German cinemas are concerned, filmmakers have engaged with immigration issues since the 1970s and second-generation migrant issues since the early 1980s. In Germany, the emergence of a generation of Turkish directors gave rise to the representation of the complexities of living between the two cultures. The films of Turkish-German filmmaker Fatih Akin have received a good deal of academic attention. Most works devoted to Akin's films deal particularly with films where he portrays the problematic of the Turkish-German mixed identities, the issues of home, displacement and identities in transit (see for example Shafik 2008, Burns 2007, 2009, and Isenberg 2001).

Similarly in France, there have been numerous works devoted to the representation of immigration in French cinema. The Algerian-French director Merzak Allouache receives much attention thanks to films where he explores the relationships of first and second generations of Algerian migrants in France (See Malkmus 1985, Rosello 2000, 2001, Khalik 2005, 2007 and Higbee 2002, 2007). Carrie Tarr, in particular, has devoted attention to the analysis of beur cinema and to the representations of female subjectivities by French women directors of the 1980s and 1990s who have generated films that 'center their narratives on female protagonists, displacing the hegemonic male gaze and foregrounding female desires and subjectivities in ways which justify the term "women's films."' (Tarr cited in Fenner 2007: 97).

Some other relevant studies have been carried out with regard to an exploration of politics and aesthetics in the representation of minority and diasporic people, for example, the analyses by Garcia Espinosa, Coco Fusco, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Teshome Gabriel, Kobena Mercer, Hamid Naficy, and Trinh T. Minh-ha.

Given the growing emergence of films by post-colonial and transnational filmmakers, critics of migration cinema have turned their attention to those diverse groupings which Hamid Naficy has termed 'accented filmmakers'. Naficy published works in 1999 and 2001 where he explored the characteristics of filmmakers who work in exile, in displacement or in-between cultures and identities. Laura Marks in 2000 and 2002 also devoted works to the analysis of how and why intercultural cinema represents embodied experience in a postcolonial, transnational world, and Ella Shohat, Louise Spence and Robert Stam focused many studies on the subject of multiculturalism, media representations, racism and colonialism (Stam and Spence 1983, Shohat and Stam 1994, Shohat 2000).

3. Literature on Spanish Migration Cinema

As previously pointed out, literature on Spanish migration cinema has mainly focused on the representations of the intercultural encounters with the 'Other' and its consequences with regard to issues of Spanish national identity. The most prominent contributors working on this area are Isabel Santaolalla (1999, 2005, 2006), Isolina Ballesteros (2001, 2005, 2007), and Daniela Flesler (2004, 2008).

Santaolalla's book, *Los 'Otros': etnicidad y 'raza' en el cine español contemporáneo/The 'Others': Ethnicity and 'Race' in Contemporary Spanish Cinema* (2005), offers the most in-depth analysis of the representation of migrants in contemporary Spanish cinema. Santaolalla refers to how cultural and media images in Spain are filled with representations of otherness that are romanticised and eroticised. She also explores how such narratives and media representations are contributing to modifying and reformulating a collective sense of Spanish identity. Santaolalla observes that these films usually tend to work on two different levels: on the one hand they expose the disparity between the migrants' expectations and the reality of their lives in the host country, and on the other, they work as a projection of Spaniards' fantasies as members of a European country whose economic growth at that moment was attracting such immigration.

Migrant women began to appear in films more frequently, so female filmmakers turned their attention to their portrayal, beginning with the representation of Caribbean female protagonists in Iciar Bollaín's *Flores de otro mundo /Flowers from another world* (1999), Asian, African, Latin American or Eastern European women in Helena Taberna's *Extranjeras*/*Foreign women* (2003), and Maghrebian in Chus Gutiérrez's film *Poniente/West* (2002) and *Retorno a Hansala/Return to Hansala* (2008). All these films have been regarded as an attempt to 'feminise' immigration (Santolalla, 2004, 2005; Ballesteros, 2005). Santaolalla (2004) analyses *Flores* and how the film constructs identity and history through space.

Similarly, Isolina Ballesteros draws attention to the feminization of Spanish immigration in Spanish cinema (2005) and presents a work on foreign and racial masculinities (2007). She focuses on the position of male black migrants as sexual subjects/objects in immigration films, generally reducing them to anonymity, without a voice and victimised. For Ballesteros, the white national, mostly male, director:

> deliberately chooses to present this combination of discursive absence and reductive bodily presence as a valid and committed way to reflect and critique common situations experienced by migrants in a society where they still lack the economic resources to script, film and produce their own perspectives (2007: 183).

Interestingly, for Ballesteros, the Spanish migration genre will not be complete until male and female migrants are able to represent themselves, selecting the narratives, the body representations and sexual relations that they consider to be the best strategies to represent their experiences. In my analysis I will present two examples of this representation, although the films I explore and which are made by migrants in Spain do not present sexual relations.

Some other academic articles have also focused on *Flores,* like those by Martín-Cabrera (2002), exploring racial violence as postcolonial memories in the film; Rosabel Argote (2003), who describes how films from 2000 to 2002 reinforce the idea of the female migrant as the 'other', mainly represented as prostitutes without a voice and constructing her as the 'Pretty Woman' of Spanish cinema. In this way Argote creates a link between Garry Marshall's film, where the prostitute character played by Julia Roberts falls in love and is 'saved' by her rich client, played by Richard Gere. Schroeder Rodríguez (2008), analyses the process of interculturation in the film and how the melodramatic characteristics of *Flores* contribute to perpetuating the Spanish rural status quo that prevents the female protagonists gaining any agency. Gabrielle Carty (2009) examines *Princesas/Princesses* (2005) from the perspective of the rhetorical functions of the central friendship between two prostitutes (a Dominican migrant and a Spanish national) and how they relate to issues of immigration. Carty refers to Shohat and Stam, particularly to their analysis of stereotype, realism and the struggle over representation, paying special attention to focalization. Peregrín and Durán (2009) analyse the film *La Novia de Lázaro /Lazaro's Girlfriend* (2002), focusing on female migration, taking as a basis of their analysis the concept of 'room for maneuver' (Chamber 1991) and seeking to offer an exploration of female subjectivities from an alternative model of difference.

Sarah Barrow (2009) investigates exile and cultural encounters in *Cosas que dejé en La Habana/Things that I Left in Havana* (1997). She obtains her inspiration from the work of Hamid Naficy to demonstrate that this film does not present exile as a homogenising experience, but that there exists instead a wide range of possibilities to reformulate the identity of the migrant. Maria Caballero Wangüemert (2009) explores and praises *Extranjeras* as a documentary that helps Spanish viewers to think new ways of understanding female subjectivities from the perspective of the migrant herself, who, according to Caballero, is integrated in the host society. Pilar Rodríguez offers an exploration of the documentary *Si nos dejan* and *Extranjeras* following Spivak's description of the ways in which the subaltern can speak in Western societies. Rodríguez tries to demonstrate how these documentaries claim new ways of giving voice to the migrants in the urban settings of Madrid and Barcelona, promoting processes of identification with the migrants and dislocating the national viewers' identities.

However, with regard to these films representing female migrants, there has been no significant research to date that problematises how the representations of migrant feminine subjectivities allow the protagonists to gain agency, nor to what extent the filmmakers' gaze contributes to

endowing the women with the capacity and the mobility to challenge the patriarchal structures of power that surround their lives in the films. This will be one of the key aims of my own analysis.

With regard to analysis of films exploring Magrehbi and African immigration, Ballesteros (2001) and Navarro (2009) have also written articles exploring racism and representation in some films like *Las cartas de Alou/Alou's Letters* (1990) and *Bwana* (1996), and in the book, *The Return of the Moor: Spanish Responses to Contemporary Moroccan Immigration (*2008), Flesler argues that the collective Spanish imaginary establishes an identification between the Maghrebian of the present day, either from Morocco or any other North African coutnry, and the historical Moor who ruled Spain (then called Al-Andalus) for almost 700 years. This identification therefore brings about fears with regard to the invading, threatening character of these considered traditional enemies of Christian Spain. Flesler also refers to the way the films contest the denial of Islamic heritage as part of Spanish identity, history and culture. Flesler shows how Spanish immigration films comply with the assumptions of differentialist racism, particularly through a narrative plot of failed intercultural romance, particularly between the male migrant and the female national. Her examples are drawn from the films *Las cartas de AIou* (Armendáriz, 1990), *Bwana* (Uribe, 1996), *Said* (Soler 1998), *Poniente* (Gutiérrez, 2002), *Tomándote* (Gardela, 2000) and *Susanna* (Chavarrías, 1997). On the other hand, some representations of the male body in female-authored Spanish cinema are explored by Barbara Zecchi (2006), who concludes that in Spanish productions directed by women, there exists a process of 'dephallicization', blurring anatomical differences by highlighting commonly shared biological characteristics between female and male characters.

Nevertheless, and given the vast number of fiction and documentary films devoted to immigration in Spanish cinema in the last 20 years, there is still a lack of analysis that draws attention to crucial aspects of the representation of the migratory experience in Spain in those two decades. Although, as we have seen above, some of the works carried out so far focus on various themes and aspects regarding gender and racial representations or issues concerning multicultural identities, there is still a lack of research that offers an in-depth analysis focused on the representations of the migrants as political subjects, exploring the cinematic strategies that contribute to empowering and including these characters in the new space. It is thus necessary to analyse how film practices can work as stages where migrants are seen and heard with a voice of their own instead of being neglected by practices of exclusion. This is why the theories that I propose below will contribute to the formation of a new field of research, merging for the first time in an investigation about migration film recent theories which draw on politics and aesthetics, cultural geography, and post colonial critique in order to bring together all those discourses that may contribute to opening a new debate about the representation of the migratory experience. The analysis of documentary and fiction films in the same in-depth analysis is also carried out here for the first time. Moreover, this analysis includes documentaries made by migrants in Spain, thereby offering an exploration of these first examples of films made by first generation migrants in Spain. My research then offers an investigation of the representation of migrants in Spain in films made by Spaniards and foreign filmmakers, drawing attention to the extent to which the formal and content characteristics of the works contribute to reinforcing or diminishing the opening of the space for the migrants to speak and be heard in.

4. Theoretical Framework

The films under consideration present thematic and formal characteristics that lead themselves to a great potential of analysis regarding politics and aesthetics, including race, ethnicity and gender issues, as well as aspects related to practices of inclusion and exclusion in democratic countries. Jacques Rancière's arguments will be useful to apply pertinently to the analysis of this body of films, as his theories ensure a solid and relevant framework from which original and significant questions about political and artistic practices will arise, in particular concerning the representation of migrants in Spanish cinema.

Steven Corcoran, editor of the English translation of Rancière's work, *Dissensus* (2010), refers in his introduction to the unique way in which Rancière 'attempts to introduce the egalitarian effects of political and artistic action into the core of theory itself' (2010: 3-4). Rancière has elaborated a politics of democratic emancipation with two distinctive concepts: police and politics. The police is a system

> that establishes a distribution of the sensible or a law that divides the community into groups, social positions and functions. This law implicitly separates those who take part from those who are excluded, and it therefore presupposes a prior aesthetic division between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable and the unsayable (2013: xiii).

On the other hand, for Rancière, 'the essence of politics consists in interrupting the distribution of the sensible by supplementing it with those who have no part in the perceptual coordinates of the community, thereby modifying the very aesthetic-political field of possibility' (2013: xiii). Nico Baumbach states that, for Rancière, politics is that which interrupts the police. He also argues that the documentary film 'might be understood as a type of fictional film that is centrally engaged in the gap between police and politics, which is to say with sensory logic with its hierarchical divisions and ways of disrupting that logic' (2010: 66). Baumbach explores how Rancière defines the potential of documentary as an aesthetic form. He recounts the way Rancière questions the relationship between documentary cinema and political equality and how he challenges the dominant conceptions of the differences between documentary and fiction. As Baumbach argues, according to Rancière it is necessary to rethink the concept of documentary in terms of its capacity to contest the real, the common or, in Rancière's words, 'the distribution of the sensible'. Documentary film takes the real as a starting point, and therefore as a point of contestation. This is what makes documentaries capable of greater 'fictional invention than "fiction" films, which are already devoted to certain stereotypical actions and characters' (2010: 57). As Baumbach points out, for Rancière, the difference between fiction film and documentary film is a question of aesthetics, that is to say, 'a regime of constructing meaning out of common sensory experience' (2010: 66).

Baumbach refers to the capacity of documentary to construct 'aesthetics of knowledge', which in Rancière's words is a 'redescription and reconfiguration of a common world of experience through which knowledge and facts acquire their meaning' (2000: 115). Cinema as documentary, then, becomes a prolific domain for experimenting with an aesthetics of knowledge: 'through

combinations of automatic silent speech with uses of montage that include sound, text and manipulations within images, documentaries can reveal the contingency of the distribution of the sensory' (2010: 67).

For Rancière, as Baumbach explains, the politics of documentary should be about 'the forms of community that are implied by the regimes of identification through which art, facts and politics are perceived and recognized' (2010: 67). This aesthetic regime of art is 'a new regime of historicity where the future is defined by restaging the past' (Ibid). As Baumbach notes, Rancière considers the word 'memory' as the link between fiction and fact. For him, documentary is about 'memory' and not about information; moreover, 'memory' does not mean an individual's subjective past experiences 'but poetic arrangements of knowledge and sensibility that belie the storehouse of static information' (Ibid).

In addition to this, Corcoran describes the way Rancière considers the relationship between art and politics not in terms of separate realities, but as realms interconnected in such a way that they possess the capacity to break with the logic that normally rules human experiences. Corcoran states that, for Rancière, politics and art are forms of dissensus in the sense that these activities create a new ordering or distribution of social life. Rancière calls this a 'redistribution of the sensible'. As Rockhill describes it in his introduction to Rancière's *The Politics of Aesthetics,* 'the distribution of the sensible is the system of divisions and boundaries that define, among other things, what is visible and audible within a particular aesthetic-political regime' (2004: 1). Rancière calls for a redistribution of this common order, advocating practices that provide everyone with the right to express himself/herself freely as well as to be part of society without being assigned to specific spatio-temporal places depending on functionalities. In other words, Rancière calls for practices of art where those who are exposing their arguments can do so regardless of their position in society, of their gender, social status or ethnic origin. In this way, the sensible can be reordered not only between existing members of a community but, more importantly, in restructuring ways that enable the staging of 'new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception' (2010: 2). In this case, we need to look at migrant characters arriving in Spain shown in the films and how they are entering the field of perception, because, as Corcoran adds, 'it can be shown that politics has an inherently aesthetic dimension and aesthetics an inherently political one' (Ibid). The subject matter of immigration opens new ways of framing the relationships between locals and migrants and offers a wide range of material which allows us to investigate how cinema affects politics, and vice versa.

Rancière argues that this breaking or disruption of the logic of social distribution is a process of equality. As stated before, for Rancière, what makes politics and arts interrelate is that both are forms of dissensus as opposed to consensus, which is the logic of social distribution underlying every hierarchy. Thus, consensus gives its proper place to everyone depending on his or her proper function. Therefore, as Corcoran explains, the difference between the proper and the improper is what helps the separation of the political from the social, art from culture, culture from commerce, as well as establishing the hierarchical distribution where everybody's right to speak and be heard depends on his/her proper place and proper function in society. As Corcoran describes, dissensus for Rancière is the opposite - it consists of a 'demonstration of a certain impropriety', breaking with the proper distribution and manifesting a rupture in the normal order. Dissensus is based on a logic of equality and works to illuminate the 'arbitrariness of the normal

social distribution for political participation and artistic practice' (2010: 5). Therefore, these arguments lead us to think how practices of art can help create dissensus, enabling viewers to see and hear those who do not normally count as being qualified to speak because of their places and the functions of their activities in society, for example, 'illegal' migrants or the unemployed. These practices of art, as Corcoran describes, are political moments, since they seek to demonstrate equality and refuse 'injustice promoted by the status quo' (2010: 10).

It is necessary, then, to create new histories and, as Baumbach argues, documentary film and video has the potential 'to allow for new kinds of histories to be told that create new common worlds heterogeneous to official narratives marked by inequality' (2010: 68). Documentaries have the capacity to create contestation over shared sensory experience, creating new sensations, new ideas and allowing us to rethink our own impressions of how the real is represented. I will argue that the four documentaries and the four fiction films discussed in the course of my thesis try to get us closer to the lives and experiences of migrants in Spain. They all expose forms of exclusion by which Spanish authorities and locals try to control space. Each one in different ways and to different extents seeks to produce effects of opening the political space, challenging what Rancière calls consensus as 'the process underlying today's continual shrinkage of political space' (2010: 72). My main aim is to investigate how and to what extent these films produce effects of dissensus and how they open up the space for political argumentation. According to Rancière:

> Political argumentation is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world in which the argument could count as an argument, one that is addressed by a subject qualified to argue, over an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and to hear the argument that s/he 'normally' has no reason either to see or to hear. It is the construction of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds (2010: 39).

In some of these films, more in some than in others, migrants and locals speak and express themselves, they take us to their houses, to their daily lives, tell us about their fears, expectations and struggles. Hence, viewers can potentially be placed at the centre of an alteration of the realm of the possible. The new subjects appearing in the films are those with no legal papers, who find themselves forced to live on the margins of society, hiding from police patrols and unable to have public medical assistance while struggling to overcome language barriers. It is necessary to look at how the films establish the relationship of the migrants with the new space, how they relate to other migrants and to locals, and how they relate to the filmmakers. As forms of politics, in Rancière's sense, these films attempt to proclaim new forms of collective enunciation, new configurations between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, new distributions of space and bodily capacities.

Considering these ideas, the analysis of the films will help us understand how these filmmakers contribute to the manifestation of scenes of dissensus, looking at how the films overcome practices of exclusion or facilitate practices of inclusion, and an understanding of what is preventing the included from hearing the excluded. Do the films create new perceptions, new orderings and new capacities? Answering this question will inform the ways cinematic practices

are able to produce an inclusive space where everybody has the same opportunities to speak and be heard. Indeed, these documentaries and fiction films seem to try and modify our sensorial perception with regard to those who normally have no part in the police order. They may mean to democratize the space and give it to those who otherwise would remain invisible and inaudible. But do they achieve it?

In addition to Rancière's theories, and in order to apply them to the analysis of these eight films more effectively, I will now look at some other complementary theories, such as those proposed by Hamid Naficy. Naficy offers in his book *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001) an account of the cinema made by exilic, diasporic, and postcolonial directors in the West since the 1960s. Naficy states that films produced by diasporic filmmakers share specific similarities arising from what they have in common: their 'liminal subjectivity and interstitial location in society and film industry' (2001: 10). In Naficy's own words, the journeys of accented filmmakers 'are not just physical and territorial but are also deeply psychological and philosophical' (2001:6). He pays special attention to the search for identity. For Naficy, in the best accented films, identity is fluid, always in a process of becoming, and accented filmmakers are liminal subjects and interstitial artists 'with multiple perspectives and conflicted or performed identities' (2001: 32). According to Naficy, this fluidity and liminality contributes to the raising of 'significant questions about political agency and about the ethic of identity politics' (Ibid). Thus, for the purpose of our study, it is most suitable to analyse to what extent the films under consideration exhibit characteristics of 'accented cinema', creating a representation of migrants that contributes to challenging fixed structures and hierarchies regarding marginal identities and politics, creating films that can stage scenes of dissensus.

For Naficy there are three types of accented authors and he bases this distinction on the kind of geographical and cultural displacement that they may experience. Firstly, 'exilic' filmmakers, those who reside in the West and maintain an ambivalent relation to both the host society and their homeland; secondly, 'diasporic' filmmakers, those who maintain a sense of ethnic consciousness about their origins which leads them to represent an idealized homeland; and finally, the 'postcolonial ethnic and identity' filmmakers, who do not emphasize their bonds with the homeland as much as the diasporic filmmakers. Despite these variations, for Asuman Suner 'accented cinema on the whole embodies a peculiar style that can be observed in its thematic preoccupations, narrative structure, and visual form' (2006: 365).

According to Naficy, some of the recurrent topics in accented films are those related to home-seeking and home-returning journeys, the search for a sense of whole identity and the feeling of displacement. Accented films also share components of style such as narrative hybridity, the juxtaposition of voices, spaces and times and a frequent employment of self-reflexivity, and self-inscription. For Naficy, 'self inscription implicates the author as an actor, which contributes to the collectivization of the film's enunciation' (1999: 137), and 'by performing multiple functions in their films, a filmmaker cannot only save money but also shape the films' vision and aesthetics and become truly its author' (1999: 138).

Kaarina Nikunen refers to the criticism that Asuman Suner (2006) makes of Naficy's concept of accented cinema as being centred in the author's experience, and agrees with Suner in emphasizing the 'concept of the accented as thematic rather than biographical only' (2011: 49).

Nevertheless, Nikunen adds that it is also crucial to acknowledge the diasporic experience of the author, since it contributes to the 'recognizable representations of the diasporic experience' (2011: 49).

On the other hand, for Nikunen, 'accented cinema' 'refers to the linguistic aspect of cultural texts': 'Accented cinema contains an idea of either multilingual or broken speech that makes the mixture of cultures audible' (2011: 49). Nikunen argues 'that national public spheres appear as mostly monolingual' and that 'national language appears self-evident' and only becomes audible when contrasted with other languages or broken accents. Therefore, for Nikunen, accented and multilingual texts would be able to render different dimensions of society audible (2011: 49). The linguistic capability of accented films would therefore lie in the diversity of speech, accents and languages presented in the films. This idea leads us back to Rancière's arguments to see how effectively the use of different languages in the films analysed in the thesis can be employed to render audible the mixture of voices from different cultures, and consequently disrupt the normal monolingual national language and shift positions of marginal subjects. We will analyse how some of the films under consideration make use of the migrants' languages in order to empower them.

Nikunen also refers to the work of Will Higbee on francophone diasporic film. Higbee's work is relevant for the purpose of our analysis because it discusses the capacity of 'transvergent' cinema to shift the positions of marginal subjects. Higbee applies Marcus Novaks' notion of 'transvergence' (2002) and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome (2004) to the area of national and transnational cinemas. He intends to contest hierarchical and fixed structures of thought. Higbee suggests that 'thinking in terms of "transvergence" rather than the transnational might help us better describe how both postcolonial and diasporic cinemas function not only across borders, nations and cultures but also within them' (2007: 80). Higbee discusses transvergence as a concept moving toward incompleteness and fragmentation. As Nakunen states, for Higbee, 'this incompleteness entails the potential for marginal subjects to shift positionings'. Thus, 'transvergence highlights identities and positionings in the process of becoming, understanding the discontinuities and differences within film cultures and filmmakers' (2011: 48). Thus, similar to our purpose, Higbee's notion of 'transvergence' cinema also looks for ways to describe the possibilities of diasporic cinema to effectively challenge and unsettle the hierarchical order or, in Rancière's terms, the distribution of the sensible. However, although it is relevant to mention Higbee's analysis of 'transvergent' cinema, we will apply Naficy's concept of 'accented cinema' in our study since it provides a wider basis for the analysis of the films under consideration.

Regarding the use of space and time in accented films, Gwendolyne Audrey Foster (2002) revises the way Naficy refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope to explore the open and closed systems of time and space in exilic films. As Foster (2002: 50) explains, Naficy distinguishes between sites of safety and liberation (depicted in borders, airports, planes, ships, etc.) and sites of idyllic chronotopes or utopic time/spaces, which are depicted in family, community, and idealised spaces. Moodley also refers to the way Naficy expresses the notion of place by means of 'spatial and temporal configurations' (2003: 66), then, a place is a certain segment 'of space to which a person or many people may attach special significance or value' (2003: 66). This, therefore, renders the concept of place as something not only physical, but as constituted by the

social relations that come with it. On the other hand, place has a temporal dimension since it is also characterised by history. Therefore, as Moodley argues 'the "displacement of filmmakers" refers not only to the physical movement of filmmakers from their own "place" to another, but also to the timing of and reasons for that move, and the social, emotional and psychological experience/expense that the move incurs' (2003: 66-67). This spatial/temporal representation, then, provides 'accented' films with a vast field of possibilities to help viewers recognise and understand the complexities and the processes involved in the migratory experience.

Naficy's arguments regarding the representation of space are also supported by the social and political geographer Doreen Massey. Accented films draw upon what Massey calls 'an engagement between space and time' (2005: 120). For Massey, places must be understood as integrations of space and time and not as points or areas on maps. Massey argues for a global sense of place 'as woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in process, as unfinished business' (2005: 130-131). She argues against a conception of space as static and immobile and states that space is the product of interrelations that must be conceptualized as unstable and temporary, always under construction and in constant change, which means that they can impact different actors and at different moments. Her work advocates a rethinking of space and its intersection with time, especially because the way space is imagined has important consequences in the world.

Jayne Rodgers refers to the way Massey insists on the need to recognize 'power-geometries': this entails the acknowledgement of the variety of power relations 'wrought by interactions between actors – in order to be able to understand how relations, rather than specific actors or practices, create and deny opportunities to act' (2004: 274). As Rodgers states, Massey proposes three principles through which space can be conceptualized: 'space is a product of interrelations; it is the sphere of the possibility for the existence of multiplicity; it is always in the process of becoming, is always being made' (Massey cited in Rodgers 2004: 282). Following Massey's principles, we find how her idea of space as fluid and as a product of interrelations coincides with the conception of space in Naficy's *Accented Cinema*. These ideas throw light on the analysis of the films with regard not only to the possibilities arising from spatio-temporal representations in the films, but also in helping to understand which practices better enable characters to be seen and understood in the films.

Naficy's account of accented cinema will help us examine how the documentaries and fiction films filmed by non-Spanish directors, and showing some of the characteristics of accented films create scenes of dissensus. In particular, we will focus on their representation of borderless and transitional spaces and characters, which in turn would empower and enhance the creation of a temporal and spatial state where both national and migrant viewers can reflect on their own transitional position in their own changing spaces. I will suggest that this liminality and borderless subjectivity help the directors compose a more conflictive vision of immigration in the cities. This vision is possible through an exploration of human relationships in a space that is shared and struggled over at the same time. In this shared space, the sense of displacement attached to the migration experience appears intrinsic to human nature. This, in sum, will demonstrate how this spatial/temporal representation helps those who have no rights and no part in society to enact those rights and play a part: in other words, to have the opportunity to speak

and be heard. Naficy states that 'Accented cinema is nonetheless a political cinema that stands opposed to authoritarianism and oppression' (2001: 30). If this is so, we will then explore how this liminality and 'accented' filmmaking contribute to the creation of more powerful scenes of dissensus, helping migrants to speak and be heard and seen in a space that is centre and margin at the same time and that belongs to all equally. Consequently, social order can be disrupted and redistributed in such a way that everybody is visible and audible.

I will also draw upon Henri Lefebvre's conceptual framework on the social production of space, which will deepen our understanding of how the films construct urban socio-spatial processes. Lefebvre's triad concords with Rancière's ideas regarding the need to think of ways to disrupt dominant structures of power. Lefebvre (2001 and summarized by McCann) distinguishes firstly 'representations of space', which are always abstract because they are perceived rather than directly lived. This is the dominant form of social 'space, the space of planners and bureaucrats, constructed through discourse' (1999: 172). Secondly, Lefebvre defines 'representational space' 'as the space of the imagination, through which life is directly lived, drawing often on physical objects to symbolize lived experience and to produce meaning' (1999: 172) The works of artists, filmmakers, poets, etc. can produce representational spaces that may construct counter-discourses and therefore open up new possibilities 'to think differently about space' (1999: 172). And thirdly, 'spatial practices' are the everyday activities of life that mediate between representational spaces and the abstract space in the representations of space. For Lefebvre, the body is central in this perceived-conceived-lived triad and they must be interconnected 'so that the "subject", the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to another without confusion – so much is a logical necessity' (1991: 40).

Closely related to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau's theories of spatial practices will also help the analysis of the ways in which the films in my corpus construct cinematic space, because, as B. R. Jackobson affirms, de Certeau never refers directly to cinema, but 'the concepts which emerge from his discussions of "ways of operating", practices of appropriating space, and the "problematics of enunciation" provide salient insight for film analysis on multiple levels' (2002: 16). De Certeau's descriptions of 'tactics' and 'strategies' will be useful in this analysis because they will inform the ways the characters make use of the space in an attempt to comply with or challenge the patriarchal order of the rural village or the status quo in the urban city. De Certeau defines a tactic as 'determined by the absence of power just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power' (1984: 38), and then:

> Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time—to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc (1984: 38).

Whereas:

> Strategies are actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place of power (the property of a proper), elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed […] they thus privilege spatial relationships (1984: 38).

De Certeau links 'strategies' with institutions and structures of power that are defined by strategies by using 'tactics'. Certeau argues 'that everyday life invents itself by poaching in countless ways on the property of others' (1984: xii). These spatial theories by Lefebvre and de Certeau connect with Rancière's ideas about the capacity of practices of art to disrupt structures of power, allowing the filmmakers and the characters in their films to make use of the rules only to dislocate them and transform them for their own benefit, to open the space and make it their own.

Furthermore, I will follow Laura Marks' analysis of 'the elements of an embodied response to cinema in terms of touch, smell, rhythm, and other bodily perceptions' (2000: xvii). This will allow me to explore the way these films draw upon these bodily perceptions and to what extent they create the sensorial perception that enables the films to overcome exclusionary practices. Marks argues that 'cinema can be the site of new configurations of sense knowledge, produced in (or in spite of) the encounter between different cultures' (2000: 195), because, 'cinema uses its audiovisual means to build images around memories' (2000: 71). Rancière's ideas about 're-ordering of the sensible' can be related to Marks' 'new configurations of sense knowledge', since filmmakers working between cultures use the visuality of cinema to transmit a physical sense of place and culture, and, in doing so, they are disrupting the hegemonic way of receiving the visual image of the cinematic experience. These filmmakers need to create new ways to express their unrepresented worlds and they achieve this by means of film aesthetics that appeal to the senses.

In *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000), Marks develops arguments for how cinema can represent embodied experience. Thus, as Martha P. Nochimson describes 'she divides her project into four modes in which intercultural cinema reclaims its memories: the memory of images, the memory of things, the memory of touch, and the memory of the senses' (2009: 397). For Marks, the experience of viewing can be 'tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes' (2000: xi). As Martín Jones puts it in his review of Marks' book, it is thanks to the creation of an aesthetic appealing to sensory perception (and not merely to an aesthetic that appeals to visual perception) that 'intercultural films challenge the ocular supremacy of the Euro-American mode of cinematic representation' (2002: 443). Marks points to 'the role of the body in the tactile experience of watching films in intercultural cinema 'to create an embodied experience of a diasporic or exiled past' (Ibid). Marks builds on the theories of Gilles Deleuze, Walter Benjamin and Henri Bergson, among others, to explore the role of the senses in cinematic representation and spectatorship. Marks suggests that:

> Deleuze's theory of time-image cinema permits a discussion of the multisensory quality of cinema, given its basis in Bergson's theory that memory is embodied in the senses (2000: xiv).

Marks takes from Deleuze and Guattari the distinction between the haptic and the optical, 'which they connect to "smooth space", or a space that enables transformation' (Ibid). But for Marks, Deleuze and Guattari's model of thinking as an open system is the most basic point of thought, because it enables her 'to make connections where they are most productive, rather than most expected' (Ibid). For Marks, these theoretical works are opposed to dominant, univocal histories, hence she bases her analysis on such theories in order to make rhizomatic connections, in her own words, 'to let my words and my ideas be productively pulled off course' (Ibid). Marks does not apply theory to the films and videos that she works with in *The Skin of the Film*, instead she calls them theoretical essays in their own right. Marks fuses Deleuze's idea of the fossil with Benjamin's idea of the photographic aura to argue that intercultural film can evoke and create the memory of its original context thanks to the fossil image, or the intercultural fetish. For Tollof Nelson, one of the achievements of *The Skin of the Film* is how it recovers under-valued or over used terms like 'recollection, fetish/fossil, mimesis, aura, visuality, and the sensorium' and 'to demystify or deflate much of the academic jargon accumulated in their circulation, to critique them within the scope of intercultural cinema, and finally to reinvest them with new meanings and possibilities' (2001: 298). According to Nelson:

> The promise of Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film* is the promise of thinking and living between critical discourses, experiences and cultures: the willingness to explore an embodied response capable of meeting the 'hybrid microcultures' of global modernity; the power to transform the memory of images, things, and the senses into 'sensuous geographies' of touch, smell and rhythm that inhabit and drift into a world increasingly divided between the policed frontier and the 'placeless' metropolis; and finally, the capacity to dwell in the critical interstice that allows thought to articulate itself on the edge of the unthought (2001: 231).

Following Marks' theories when analysing these films and videos will help me understand how the films I am exploring offer new relationships between what is visible and what is invisible, and therefore new ways of creating dissensus. Particularly the case in some of the films analysed in the course of the thesis, the filmmakers create a certain space for the excluded by means of engaging the viewer in multisensory ways, transmitting that physical sense of place and culture through the visual medium of cinema. As Marks puts it:

> Haptic cinema, by appearing to us as an object with which we interact rather than an illusion into which we enter, calls on this sort of embodied intelligence. In the dynamic movement between the optical and haptic ways of seeing, it is possible to compare different ways of knowing and interacting with an other (2002: 18).

I will argue that through extreme close-ups of food being touched and cooked, hair and skin being caressed and bodies moving to rhythmic sound, the films examined in this thesis create

and evoke memories of past histories, of lost homes and of those movements between space and time that come closer so the viewer can experience them, thanks to the multisensory embodied experience that this not only ocular but also bodily way of viewing can facilitate. For Marks, the cultural memories of diasporic communities must be communicated through sense memory particularly when 'official histories cannot comprehend certain realms of experience' (2000: 223). For Marks, cultural encounters in the metropolis provide new forms of sense experience and new ways of embodying our relation to the world, and these are emerging configurations that go against 'global culture's increasing simulation of sensory experience' (2000: 23).

It is also pertinent to look at the movement strategies that the filmmakers use, since some of the films also provide an aesthetic of movement that can be explored in terms of its effect at the level of the cinematic embodied experience. In relation to this, it is interesting for our study how Dimitri Eleftheriotis redraws the theoretical boundaries when interrogating movement within travel cinema. As Laura Rascaroli describes in her review of Eleftheriotis' *Cinematic Journeys* (2010), he offers a methodological alternative proposing as key analytical tools two distinct axes – activity↔inactivity and certainty↔uncertainty. 'The first axis refers to the relationship between the camera and the diegetic body of characters and the second to movement of/in the frame that explores, discovers or reveals' (cited in Rascaroli, 2011: 294).

Questions of movement and meaning are of most interest when analysing the films to discover how the relationship between exploration, discovery and revelation functions in these films with regard to the representation of migrants in the new space. Although all the films play with very different forms of movement, it is necessary to explore how they engage with movement to create productive and/or unproductive wanderings, pleasure and displeasure, anxiety, displacement, etc. For example, in *En construcción* the movement created by the camera is always very slow, whereas in *Si nos dejan* there is perpetual movement. However, in both of these films, the relationship between exploration, discovery and revelation evokes at times similar responses, confronting traditional regimes of vision in search of new ones more capable of transmitting the human experiences of the increasingly mobile world in which we live.

Although, as Marks explains, 'there is a temptation to see the haptic as a feminine form of viewing' (2001: 7), and she bases her argument on the works of art historians like Svetlana Alpers, Jennifer Fisher or Naomi Schor, who have analysed alternative economies of embodied looking. However, Marks prefers 'to see the haptic as a feminist visual strategy, an underground visual tradition rather than a feminine quality in particular' (2001: 7). Marks understands that these ways of viewing can be used as a 'strategy to be called on when our optical resources fail to see' (Ibid). Besides, and in connection with this, it is also necessary to look into ways in which the films' aesthetics facilitate gendered perspectives into the experience of migration. I will suggest that the films under consideration exhibit gendered performative acts that can be described either as conforming to expected socio-political norms and conventions, therefore complying with the consensus, or, on the contrary, creating new contestation over the traditionally expected gender identities. In the latter case, the films may also function as disruptions of pre-established assumptions, because as Judith Butler puts it, 'it seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and that these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest that expectation in some way' (1988: 527).

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity provides a framework for understanding how the films play with gender identities and stereotypes associated with female and male migrants. Butler uncouples binaristic categories of sex and gender, considering them as performances gaining authority through reiterated practices of 'doing' gender and sexuality. Through reiterative performative acts, these binaristic categories have settled as conceptual norms that function as social regulations, but the performative nature of the law that enforces such norms also brings with it the possibility of disrupting that law. For Butler:

> Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts (1990: 191).

For Butler, identity is never complete but rather, deeply provisional, ambiguous and unstable. Since gender is socially constructed, it is necessary to look at the meaning of construction itself, which entails a rethinking that not only accounts for the production of normative identities, but also for the simultaneous production of abject identities, which may also paradoxically lead to the subversion of such normative identities, because the performative acts of such identities can then be reappropriated and reinscribed. According to Butler society and culture are continually changing, therefore the construction of gendered identity is also subject to the dynamics of continuous change conditioned by processes of identification taking place within a given historical discourse. As she describes it:

> As historically specific organisations of language, discourses present themselves in the plural, coexisting within temporal frames, and instituting unpredictable and inadvertent convergences from which specific modalities of discursive possibilities are engendered (1990: 145).

According to Robert Shail 'any visual representation of gender tends inevitably to contain both the imprint of dominant ideology and the inherent contradictions of that ideology' (2001: 100). For Shail, Judith Butler's approach, although mainly aimed at addressing feminist discourses of female identity, applies with equal veracity to the construction of masculinity 'as it does to femininity' (2001: 99).

Similarly to Rancière's theories, Butler's approach will help the analysis of the films as sites of contestation in the sense that these theories seek to reveal and thwart hierarchical configurations of power. Butler emphasizes that performative shifts can destabilize gender fabrications revealing their own performativity. For Butler, if the demands on the process of gender identification placed by patriarchy are unstable, individuals are then required to be able to adopt altering constructions, so that 'multiple and coexisting identifications produce conflicts, convergences, and innovative dissonances within gender configurations which contest the fixity of masculine and feminine placements' (Butler, 1990: 67). I will examine how and to what extent the films challenge this 'heterosexual matrix', this stability of the patriarchal process of gender identification, and therefore will observe whether they contest this fixity of gender regulations by means of performative shifts. By looking at how the films make use of gender

performances, we can establish how and to what extent these representations contribute to the construction of dissensus, since it is accepted that gender plays an important role in the representation of migrants and in reinforcing stereotypes associated with race and ethnic origin. Therefore, one way of disrupting this consensual association would be to reveal gender as constructed and not bounded by any other cultural element but its own fluidity.

Rancière's recent work provides a relevant and original theoretical framework to investigate how films construct and/or deconstruct power relations. What are the mechanisms at work that prevent us from seeing and hearing those who are on the other side? How can cinema aesthetics give rise to new representations and new ways of looking at and experiencing cinema? What visual strategies prove disruptive of hegemonic cinematic practices? In sum, we need to think of new ways in which cinema can create contestation over our sensory experiences by means of its resources.

If we can understand these visual regimes and the methodologies that work more effectively in the representation of migrants and locals, we will find the means to contribute towards more inclusive films. I will demonstrate that in order to create contestation and disrupt the logic of order and the distribution of the sensible that keep the poor migrant in place, without a voice and invisible, practices of art, in this case film practices, need to exhibit characteristics found in accented cinema, by highlighting the transitory condition of all human beings and the commonly shared experiences of estrangement, displacement and the search for identity. Moreover, the perceptive detail found in haptic cinema can also unsettle normative ways of seeing and perceiving, transforming the traditional visual experience into a new embodied multi-sensorial experience that can better identify and understand the migratory process. Moreover, it is also necessary to explore the mechanisms that open the space, and this is why Massey and other cultural geographers like Lefebvre and de Certeau offer an alternative reading of the ways the space is imagined in different ways by different people and with different objectives in mind. Space, then, must be contested in order to challenge exclusionary politics, by means of spatial and temporal representations that thwart pre-established plans in favour of more liminal, fluid and inclusive spaces. This fluidity can also be applied to gender and gender performativities in films, as described by Butler, since, through an analysis of how gender assumptions can be agitated and undone in connection with ethnic and racial assumptions, we can also observe how these gender performative acts can destabilise normative conventions with regard to the representation of migrants in cinema.

PART 1: THE DOCUMENTARIES

5. Introduction

This section will focus on the analysis of four documentaries representing migrants in distinctive quarters of Madrid and Barcelona. Two of these documentaries, *En construcción* (2001) and *Extranjeras* (2003) are directed by Spanish filmmakers, whereas the other two, *Si nos dejan* (2004) and *El otro lado...un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (2002) are filmed by non-Spanish directors. My main aim is to demonstrate how and to what extent the documentaries attain a conflictual representation of the space and lives of the migrants, one that challenges conceptions about practices of exclusion and inclusion in these Spanish cities.

En construcción and *Si nos dejan* depict the city of Barcelona, but while *Si nos dejan* takes us on a ride through the whole city, *En construcción* is based on the area of El Raval, where locals and migrants share a space in the process of change. On the other hand, while both *Extranjeras* and *El otro lado* portray the popular quarter of Lavapiés in Madrid, the former presents female migrants from different parts of the world, while the latter offers a depiction of a human melting pot that is highly contested as well as filled with multicultural performances through music and theatre.

I will suggest that particularly the films by Egyptian Basel Ramsis (*El otro lado*) and Argentinian Ana Torres (*Si nos dejan*) contribute to the representation of a more open and inclusive space, although always contested. These films seek to enable the invisible and unheard migrants to make use of the stage to be seen, to proclaim what they want to say and to be heard. These documentaries intend to provide the settings and tools to criticise the exclusive host society and to contest the political system that works towards maintaining the exclusion of undesired migrants. I will suggest that, due not only to Torres' and Ramsis' position as migrants themselves but also to the formal elements they employ, they create documentaries which function as political speech, a speech that allows them to give voice, to empower and represent the various migrant characters in the films, although not without hierarchies in this representation, since some gain more agency than others.

The main focus of this analysis is to explore the way these films represent the relationship between ethnicity and the space that includes some and excludes others. Furthermore, I will explore how and to what extent the formal characteristics of the films I study contribute to the creation of a space that is imagined as including the characters. In other words, I will investigate how the films open the space for political argumentation.

As I have already made clear above, my main theoretical framework will derive from the work of Jacques Rancière, Hamid Naficy, Doreen Massey, Laura Marks and Judith Butler. I will also draw upon Henri Lefebvre's conceptual framework on the social production of space and Michel de Certeau's concepts on spatial practices. Moreover, it is also necessary to look at documentary film theory and analyse how self-reflexivity and performativity add to the creation of this intended inclusive space.

With documentaries, the relationship between fiction and reality may be rendered in such a way that new ways of presenting and understanding the space can help to open up new possibilities. For Bruzzi, 'the new performative documentaries herald a different notion of documentary "truth" that acknowledges the construction and artificiality of even the non-fiction film' (2006: 186). Bruzzi cites Caryl Flinn to point out her analysis of Jennie Livingston's *Paris is Burning* (1990) that 'in fact it is no stretch to say that documentary films, in many ways more so than other cinematic forms, reveal the constructed – indeed, performative – nature of the world around us' (cited in Bruzzi, 2006: 188). Furthermore, Naficy states that with self-reflexivity 'there is a considerable ambiguity regarding who is gaining or losing sight, hearing, or power' (2001: 276). For Naficy, some self-reflexive strategies 'create and inscribe distance, or bridge the distance, between diegetic characters who are in different temporal and spatial zones due to their displacement' (2001: 276). Documentaries, particularly self-reflexive documentaries which focus on the representation of migrants in the host country, can create excellent opportunities to reveal the constructed nature of the world around us, since once the constructedness is revealed and exposed, it can be more easily disrupted, and then hierarchical structures regarding migrants and their representation can be better challenged.

5.1. Documentary Theory

Films made in documentary mode contribute to the creation of representations where migrants and locals encounter themselves and others in their continuously changing space. Furthermore, I will argue that those documentaries that employ a reflexive mode help viewers reflect on their own changing space. Nichols states that 'politically reflexive documentaries point to us as viewers and social actors, not to films, as the agents who can bridge this gap between what exists and the new forms we can make from it' (2001: 130). For Nichols, filmmakers use documentary form when they want to engage viewers in issues related to the historical world we share and in an attempt 'to turn our attention to the world we already occupy' (2001: xiv). For Nichols documentary represents the world in three ways:

> Firstly, by offering a likeness or depiction of the world that bears a recognizable familiarity. Secondly, documentaries also stand for or represent the interests of others. Thirdly, documentaries may represent the world in the same way a lawyer may represent a client's interests: they put the case for a particular view or interpretation of evidence before us (2001: 2-3).

On the other hand, Stella Bruzzi breaks with the traditional assumptions by asserting that documentaries basically fail to achieve what they intend to from the start, which is to represent reality. Instead, for Bruzzi, who is influenced by the ideas of Judith Butler and Noël Carroll, 'documentaries are performative acts, inherently fluid and unstable and informed by issues of performance and performativity' (2006: 1). Bruzzi criticises Nichol's and Michael Renov's unwillingness to consider the dialectical relationship between reality and representation in documentary form (2006: 5), or in other words, Bruzzi considers that those perspectives do not look at the productiveness and complexities existing in the relationship between 'the text, the reality it represents and the spectator' (2006: 7).

Rancière's conceptions of documentary fall closer to Bruzzi's arguments at the same time as going a step further. The instability and fluidity that Bruzzi claims to be inherent to non-fiction film, plus the dialectical relationship between cinema and reality, take us to Rancière's views of documentary as a continuous site where this relationship is taken as an arena of contestation. As Baumbach states, for Rancière, documentary should be considered 'as a type of fiction film that opens up new possibilities for fictional invention' precisely because, as discussed earlier, it takes 'the real as a point of contestation rather than an effect to be produced' (2010: 57). Therefore, as Baumbach explains, the question of 'what is the precise relationship between political equality and the experience of art of film' should be kept as 'a site of struggle and disagreement' (2010: 58). Therefore, through documentary form, being itself a permanently changing and fluid vehicle of representation, the transitional characteristics in the portrayal of migrants and the space they are in are enhanced (by this medium), thus intensifying the rupture with the evident and the unquestionable, enabling a new field of possibilities, of new aesthetic sensory experiences and of new forms of emancipation. As Rancière puts it:

> The idea of emancipation implies that there are never places that impose their law, that there are always several spaces in a space, several ways of occupying it, and each time the trick is knowing what sort of capacities one is setting in motion, what sort of world one is constructing (2007).

The search for 'reality' is not that important and it is not the centre of the argument for these authors. In my opinion, Bruzzi and Rancière's theories of documentary form are complementary and give way to a new field of possibilities, leading to an analysis of documentaries as a locus for experimentation, particularly by looking at how they establish a relationship between fact and image. In addition, these ideas open up routes to think about how documentaries can create contestation over the common, in sum, working towards Rancière's main goal: 'equality without conditions' (Baumbach, 2010: 58).

5.2. The Documentaries

Sara Ahmed in her work *Strange Encounters*, analyses 'globalisation, migration and multiculturalism as particular modes of proximity, which produce the figure of "the stranger" in different ways' (2000: 13). Ahmed (2000: 57) cites Diken's statement 'that migrants are often constructed as strangers' (1998: 123) and argues that 'in such a construction, the strangers are the ones who, in leaving the home of their nation, are the bodies out of place in the everyday world they inhabit, and in the communities in which they come to live' (2000: 78). She refers to the need to deconstruct the fetishisation of the 'strangers', which renders them as static and passive objects instead of subjects of knowledge. Ahmed proposes an examination of the encounters that take place with others since 'in daily meetings with others, subjects are perpetually reconstituted' (2000: 7) and she claims the necessity of considering 'how the stranger is an effect of processes of inclusion and exclusion' (2000: 6).

Similarly, Julia Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* also offers a study of the 'stranger' and the 'foreigner', arguing that 'the question arising is no longer that of welcoming the foreigner within a system that obliterates him but rather that of promoting the togetherness of those foreigners

that we all recognize ourselves to be' (1991: 3). She states that the sense of 'strangeness' or 'foreignness' comes to us when we become conscious of our own feelings of difference, and then the foreigner that lives within us disappears when we understand that we are all foreigners, 'unamenable to bonds and communities' (1991: 1).

Kristeva's idea of the disappearing of the foreign within us is directly linked to the need to understand we are all equal, all foreigners, and that the idea that separates human beings is the belief that we belong somewhere, when what is needed, in order to get rid of prejudices, differences and social injustices, is to consider the other to be the same as you, and you the same as the other. Nothing belongs to anybody because we are all in transit, we do not own the space, and we all share it. To be a foreigner implies knowledge of the feelings of displacement, certain nostalgia for something lost, and struggle in the search for one's own identity.

In the films under consideration, those filmmakers who come from a different country seem to help visualize and understand more clearly the transient nature of the human body in its space. The representational spaces (in Lefebvrian terms) in the films by non-Spaniards appear as lived spaces that are more challenging, contested and struggled over. It might well be that representational spaces where the subjects can recognise themselves to be all equally foreign, unamenable to bonds and communities, may promote the togetherness of us all and, by means of inclusive films, also promote inclusive spaces in inclusive societies.

It is my main objective to analyse these four documentaries in order to recognise how migrants' representations can work towards a better understanding of practices of exclusion and inclusion, as well as to acknowledge the capacity of these representations to bring different communities together, particularly thanks to their differences. I intend to demonstrate how human differences can be portrayed in a way that can give rise to a shared sense of solidarity, without homogenising, but instead by acknowledging our own strangeness and the foreign that lives within us all.

These documentaries offer remarkable opportunities to unfold ways in which artistic practices, in this case filmic practices, may create rupture within the pre-established order of things, shifting positions and informing ways of bridging gaps between different communities. These films are relevant for various reasons. Firstly, they share common characteristics, such as the representation of migrant characters in the urban space of the two main cities in Spain. Secondly, it is also interesting to establish a comparison between the films according to the filmmakers' origins: *En construcción* and *Extranjeras* are documentaries made by Spanish directors, while *Si nos dejan* and *El otro lado* are documentaries made by an Argentinian and an Egyptian respectively. And thirdly, they all explore the intimate relationship between space and time, reflecting on exclusion and inclusion practices as well as showing ways of challenging hegemonic discourses and hierarchical structures.

6. The Construction of Dissensus in *En construcción* (Jose Luís Guerín, 2001)

6.1 Introduction

En construcción explores the life in Barcelona's Raval or Barrio Chino. The documentary involves the reconstruction of a luxury apartment complex building after the demolition of the previous old one. Almost everybody in the film comes from elsewhere: they are either migrants from other countries or from other areas of Spain. However, although *En construcción* is not a film about immigration per se, it presents two Moroccan builders, Abdel Aziz and Abdelsalam, and their representation is remarkable on account of the originality with which they perform their migrant identities.

I will analyse how the film offers a spatial and temporal celebration of this quarter of the city at a moment of change. This is a place that has traditionally been acclaimed for its multiculturalism and bohemian aesthetics, but that now is being transformed by gentrification projects into a monochrome landscape of bodies and identities. The new residents will constitute a homogeneous social middle class group as opposed to the melting pot that El Raval has always been. The film represents a critique of the way the authorities of Barcelona control the use of the space by urban plans and developments, based on politics of exclusion with the aim of homogenizing the quarter and imposing the hierarchical social order, or what Rancière would call 'consensus', distributing the space according to the subjects' functionalities. Guerín shows the inequalities and injustice of the city's exclusionary politics, and he achieves this by means of a camera that works for and situates itself on the side of the workers and of the excluded. I will investigate how this is achieved and its consequences for the representation of the Moroccan migrants in the film.

En construcción, as a self-reflexive documentary, keeps reminding us that what we are looking at is also a construction. The title itself ('work in progress' or ' under construction') refers both to the subject matter of the film (a building being constructed) and also to the documentary's construction process. Cinematic and architectural practices intertwine, creating an intimate connection that keeps the viewer aware of the parallelism between the film itself and the building portrayed in it. Both film and building construction progress are immersed in a process of continuous transformation and movement in which the viewer becomes an active participant.

The dialectical relationship between director, film and viewer facilitates a representation that celebrates the cultural variety that El Raval has traditionally been known for. As Baumbach points out, for Rancière, the difference between fiction film and documentary film is a question of aesthetics, that is to say, 'a regime of constructing meaning out of common sensory experience' (2010: 66). According to Abigail Loxham (2006), Guerín's use of formal techniques creates an inclusive film that immerses the viewer in a democratic cinematic city. For Loxham, the filming language that Guerín uses can be read as 'haptic in quality' (2010: 34), and the detailed observation of Guerín's camera and its 'refusal to delimit strict boundaries between city and body' is central to the film and entails an alternative way of living within the city (2006: 34).

Therefore Guerín 'empowers the characters despite the apparent exclusion that surrounds them' (2006: 33). I agree with Loxham's analysis and I believe Guerín not only creates an inclusive documentary, but also an artistic and political representation of dissensus as a contestation of dominant static notions. This is achieved by means of the use of a remarkable fluidity and liminality within the narrative and the spatial-temporal relation, as well as through the portrayal of unsuspected and fertile beauty within the frames of what, at first sight, would appear as an arid and unattractive urban and human landscape, especially thanks to, as Loxham explains, the way Guerín immerses the viewer in the building space through haptic visuality.

Guerín brings us closer to the space he creates and makes us participate in it, allowing us to experience rupture within our own experience as viewers, not only by prompting our own memories and playing with our senses, but also doing this in such way that our foundations as viewers are shaken, as are the building foundations and their inhabitants, who are or will have to face evictions and be forced to look for somewhere else to live. The building under construction becomes the site of conflict and struggle and so does the film itself. Guerín concentrates on the portrayal of the building as the physical and symbolic monument of dissensus, although, paradoxically, this building, when it is completed, will represent exactly the opposite, the physical and symbolic monument of consensus.

In Lefebvrian terms, the process of reconstruction that the Government has designed for El Raval exemplifies the 'abstract spaces' of the representations of space aiming to construct consensus, and what Guerín offers is a representational space, which constructs a counter-discourse that opens up new possibilities to think and understand El Raval in a different way. We see, for example, an open and inclusive quarter where boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds play football next to the building under construction. They have taken the space and made it theirs, using it as a leisure space that is shared and enjoyed by them all on equal terms.

En construcción plays with spatial and temporal dislocation, with the ideas of 'home' and the 'past'. Sarah Ahmed argues that 'if we think of home as an outer skin, then we can also consider how migration involves, not only spatial dislocation, but also temporal dislocation: the past becomes associated with a home that is impossible to inhabit, and be inhabited by, in the present' [sic] (2000: 91). For Ahmed, 'places behave like past memories, like memories' (2000: 91). Guerín constructs an inner inclusive space that works against the exclusion and alienation of its inhabitants by political practices. The film is, then, a construction of a dissensus in itself in terms of both form and content.

6.2 The Cinematic Construction of Dissensus

En construcción portrays a variety of characters, among the most important being Juani and Iván, a couple of young lovers who are evicted from their flat for missing payments and who also cannot afford a flat in the new building. Juani is a Spanish gypsy and works as a prostitute, whereas Iván does not work and seems to be dependent physically and emotionally on his partner. There are a number of builders working on the construction site, such as the foreman of the site and his apprentice son. There are also two Moroccan builders, Abdel Aziz and the younger Abdelsalam, and the Galician Santiago. Additionally, there are few other characters who

live in the buildings next to the building site, for example, the little girl who likes playing in the building site, an old man who is homeless and collects items from the demolished building, and the young girl, who has a romantic relationship with the foreman's son.

The film presents this building in progress as a microcosm and as an allegory of the building in progress of the human world. The film, like the building itself, arises as the symbolic struggle of the natural order of things against the imposed social order, or 'the distribution of the sensible'. It represents the construction of dissensus as arising spontaneously and slowly moving towards consensus, a consensus that unavoidably will prevail when the construction finishes. In the meantime, and while the structure of the building is open to the outside, it symbolizes the power of freedom and free human interactions, as opposed to the restrictive nature of closed spaces like the building itself when completed and shut to the outside.

The building under construction represents the landscape where both artistic and political practices meet. Most sequences are shot with a static camera, which creates an observational mode that helps the viewer absorb the images and to be immersed in the simplest and smallest details of everyday life. This is not only a film about a building; it is also a film about a film being constructed in an urban landscape being transformed. Therefore, the way Guerín chooses to express it is at a slow pace, as this construction is happening slowly, like life; these small things move slowly, but they are also the things that can create big changes in society. The camera focuses in a contemplative manner on the materiality of the objects to such an extent that the viewer can perceive the texture of the bodies and of the building walls and materials. For example, we see many close-ups of Juani's and Iván's faces coming very close together. One scene shows Juani putting make-up on her face with a haptic quality that invites the viewer to almost caress the 'skin' of the image. Loxham refers to the way Guerín brings the camera closer to its subjects so the viewer can 'apprehend the lived physical reality of the situation' (2007: 40). The camera combines extreme close-ups with long takes, which increases the viewer's feeling of entrapment, bringing him/her closer to the physical and emotional state in which Juani is forced to work as a prostitute while she is about to be evicted from her home.

Guerín focuses on the materiality of the images to create an even more symbolic and geopolitical value of the quality of both the building and of the documentary itself, as happens, for example, when the soft, dense concrete falls slowly down the stair well in a similar style to the way nature documentaries represent the movement of volcanic lava. Another powerful scene which privileges the materiality of the building is the sequence of shots when the builders are drawing lines with bright blue powder on the grey walls because the objects (hands, string, blue powder, concrete wall) are filmed in slow close ups with diegetic sound, intensifying the sensory experience to more than a mere visual experience, thanks to a representation that also privileges the tactile and the auditory sensory experience of looking. As Marks argues, 'the haptic forces the viewer to contemplate the image instead of being pulled into narrative' (2001: 163).

Rancière states in a conversation with Fulvia Carnivale and John Kelsey (2007) that 'dissensus is a modification of the coordinates of the sensible, a spectacle or a tonality that replaces another.' In relation to this, Guerín in *En construcción*, instead of focusing on what would most typical of a building site in a marginal area (the aridness of the concrete walls, unpleasant building noises and unattractive underprivileged characters), chooses to highlight sources of

beauty concealed within the concrete landscape and within these characters. Indeed, he seeks to modify the coordinates of the sensible by blurring the boundaries of pre-established conceptions about the world, assumptions in the relationship between fact and image and between documentary and fiction. Furthermore, Guerín is also blurring our own assumptions about what is given as fact, loosening the bonds that have been built in us with regard to our own identities and beliefs, and making us able to establish new ways of looking, enabling us to overcome what is given as evident and unquestionable. In this way, Guerín creates the dissensus that, in Rancière's words, comes to signify a free way to reconstruct relationships 'between places and identities, spectacles and gazes, proximities and distances' (Rancière, Carnivale and Kensley, 2007).

By means of self-reflexive techniques, thanks to the filmic language and aesthetics and the dialectical relationship that he establishes with the images and the viewers, Guerín creates a landscape of possibilities and makes it a site of 'resistance'. He offers us a film that works as a site of contestation, just as the building in construction is also being contested. Moreover, the dissensual power of the film becomes more lasting than the temporary dissensus that the building under construction signifies. Guerín gives us the opportunity to construct meaning too, and this endows the dissensus created with a more permanent dimension that will take place every time the film is viewed.

6.3 Naficy's 'Accented Cinema' and *En construcción* as an Accented Documentary

Although Guerín is not an exiled or a migrant filmmaker, he shares some of the characteristics of accented filmmaking. For Naficy, accented films are 'open-form and closed-form visual style, fragmented, multilingual, self-reflexive' with subject matter and themes 'that involve journeying, historicity, identity, and displacement' (2001: 4). Guerín uses the transitional, liminal and marginal dimension of the space he portrays to create a film that challenges notions surrounding migratory experiences, questions about memory, home and displacement. He also suggests that the search for identity and the sense of home and place are common human experiences. The temporal, transitional characteristics of a building under construction make the perfect stage for dissensus because, within this liminality and continuous transformation, it is also easier to represent and reinforce the ephemeral nature of all humans, what we all have in common, the transitory dimension of our own bodies always changing in a continuous changing space that intrinsically belongs to all of us equally.

Most of the characters come from elsewhere, two of them originally from Morocco, but many of them come from other places in Spain. The displacement and alienation bring them together. The film suggests that what makes us human is our capacity to love, communicate, think and die, and the film reflects on all these common aspects of our lives. Indeed, the only song heard in the film is a Cuban bolero, sung spontaneously a cappella by a man sitting around the building area with his friends. The bolero is a slow tempo song, which matches perfectly with the slow tempo of the film itself, and Guerín focuses on the chorus:

don't pay attention to what people say
let yourself go and love me more,

if this is scandalous,
it is more shameful
not knowing how to love
(My translation)

The song is also part of the credits of the film and the sound that goes with it is the diegetic sound of the building works: noises of cranes, demolitions, metal objects falling, etc. The song urges us to believe in true love and forget about prejudices associated with class, gender, religious beliefs and ethnic origins.

Furthermore, the transitional tone of the film and its subject matter are enhanced by the space portrayed in it, since El Raval is a borderline area of the city, traditionally marginal and in constant transformation. These qualities are also shared with the documentary genre itself, traditionally considered as a marginal genre compared to mainstream film. According to Marsh and Nair, the marginality of the documentary makes it the ideal medium to portray marginal identities (2004: 108). These characters are strongly affected by the construction, which is continuously changing and becoming something different by the minute. Within this context, migrant subjectivities are represented through the borderline space they are in, and, by means of the fluidity of the documentary medium, portrayed as being more fluid and transitory, like the building itself and the whole of El Raval. In this space, consequently, gender and race performativities are more fluid, and dominant notions and conventions are easier to challenge.

We observe numerous close-up shots with manual work, vibrant blue powder to mark the lines, strings clashing against the blue and the grey, precision in mathematical calculations and manual handling, and the visual experience of seeing running concrete invade the frame. All this takes us closer to the inside world of building techniques and processes and to bring to the surface that there is always more to the eye than what we normally expect when we are looking. The filmic and physical building construction is in progress as builders, filmmakers and viewers are constructing it. The beauty within the small detail of daily life can be seen if one can look carefully, and the viewer is kept active thinking about reality and fiction, reflecting on what is staged and what is not, and why this may be.

Guerín presents us with new ways of seeing, with a remarkable symbolic analogy that is established in relation to the shaking foundations of the building in construction and of the nearby buildings and the people affected by it, not only physically but also emotionally. In this way, Guerín re-orders what is doable, sayable and visible, because as Rancière argues, 'consensus means that the sensory is given as univocal' (2010: 149). However, due to the way the film makes us participate and plays with our filmic experience, *En construcción* entails what Rancière calls practices of fiction that invent 'new trajectories between what can be seen, what can be said and what can be done' (2010: 149).

The title of the film, 'En Construcción' (literally 'Under Construction' and 'Work in Progress' in its English version), refers both to the construction of the building being filmed and also to the construction of the film itself. In this way, film and building are intimately connected, as architecture and cinema. Various scenes express this connection; for instance, soon after the film begins, we see a pair of graffiti eyes in the wall while the titles tell us 'things heard and seen

during the construction of a building in El Raval'. However, later on, we see these eyes crumbling when the wall is being demolished, as a warning of what will happen to our expectations and assumptions during the film. Similarly, at one point in the film we see Abdel Aziz holding a lighted torch to illuminate Santiago while he is building a brick wall at night. This torch is a lighting device used by the builders but it is also very similar to the ones used by the filmmakers, which connects the building of the wall to the building of the film. Furthermore, the final shot of Juani and Iván walking forwards when the building is completed coincides with the conclusion of the film, emphasizing the strong spatial/temporal relationship created to connect the film with the building itself.

But even more significant is the scene where Guerín more explicitly connects cinema and architecture, mixing fiction and reality while celebrating past traditions regarding building construction and cinematic techniques. This nostalgic look towards classic cinema takes place when the TV sets in the surrounding flats are broadcasting Howard Hawks's *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955). This film portrays the building of the Pyramids of Egypt, and both Abdel Aziz and Santiago agree on the greatness of the film and of the architectural techniques that the film depicted, as opposed to present day building techniques and styles. Guerín establishes an analogy between the construction site the men are working in and this fiction film's pyramids, which were also built as graves for the Pharaohs. This reminds us of Naficy's description of accented films in the sense that:

> They signify upon cinematic traditions by means of their artisanal and collective production modes, their aesthetics and politics of smallness and imperfection, and their narrative strategies that cross generic boundaries and undermine cinematic realism (2001: 5).

Furthermore, the effect of the film within a film brings about issues related to the relationship between fact and image; it intensifies the relation between both and creates close spatial and temporal links between the two, despite being so far apart in both space and time. The effect created also reminds us of the similarities between the workers in Barcelona and the slaves in Egypt, as well as entailing a criticism of a politics that takes the underprivileged to work serving the interests of the privileged and not the opposite. As Bruzzi and Rancière proclaim, this is how documentaries can create new possibilities through establishing relationships between fact and image. Guerín thus offers a film that works as contestation of reality and fiction, and of practices of exclusion and inclusion, as the film also points to a landscape of unequal social structures and exclusive political practices. The new building will homogenize the space of El Raval, but the people living there do not know or understand what changes these new buildings are bringing upon them. An example of this lack of awareness is presented to us when the old man explains that the redevelopment of the area will make El Raval prettier and more modern, transforming it into a more beautiful modern space, which in turn will attract a better kind of tourism. Guerín takes us closer to this man, showing conversations he has with another friend in a bar, talking about the beautiful items he has been collecting for years. However, his friend looks at these items in disbelief, as they are just ordinary objects with no value whatsoever, but the way the old man describes them as small treasures exemplifies the capacity that some have to find beauty within an object where others can only see the apparent surface, lacking the vision to be able to

see what is special within an object. This is what Guerín attempts to achieve: the viewer of his film should see the beauty of a place like El Raval and its inhabitants.

Guerín, like this old rubbish collector, tries to make us see things from a different perspective, a liberating aesthetic experience when looking at the beauty concealed within normal things. However, the man shows his naivety when he does not recognise that he too is part of the 'ugliness' and the unwanted elements of the quarter that the authorities intend to remove. This informs us of the incorrect information that the inhabitants of El Raval really have about the demolitions and rebuilding process, which reinforces the idea of how social structures of power work, denying as much information as possible and frustrating the possibility of defending themselves for those who are considered as less powerful and less privileged in society.

6.4 The Democratics of Space and Time

More examples of this dialogue between fact and fiction can be noticed when the builders discover the remains of what seems to be a Roman necropolis. The scene shows locals giving their different points of view about the findings. These remains also provides Guerín with an opportunity to express how mortality makes us all equal, as the Spanish woman tells the female Moroccan when looking at the remains: 'We all fit in the same hole, rich and poor' (my translation). This scene keeps the viewer looking at the faces of the people watching the excavation works. A man says that he believes these remains are the men killed during Franco's regime. This brings to the surface a powerful historical memory for Spanish culture, which is still very much conditioned by the consequences of the past dictatorship. The camera does not allow us to look at the remains, instead it keeps us concentrating on the effects they have on the people who are looking. Again, we are reminded of Guerín's use of the camera as he continues to play with our assumptions and expectations as viewers. Any other type of documentary would have shown us the remains, but Guerín purposefully restricts our vision so we are reminded that this film is giving us the opportunity to look in a different way, and hence we can also think differently, finding new trajectories to think about what is visible. Besides, by denying us a look at the remains, he is shifting the power of looking to the inhabitants of El Raval. This shift of vision also functions as empowerment for the inhabitants of the quarter and compensates for the lack of knowledge about the consequences that this redevelopment project really means for their neighbourhood.

Guerín establishes an intimate relationship between space and time; they are intersected to remind us of the temporality of the places we live in. The layers of the soil under the building where remains are found describe how the body is attached to space through time. El Raval is now the result of what it has been for all its past, but also for what is happening now and will happen in the future. This space belongs to everyone, to the ones who had been before, like the remains of the bodies found, and everybody else who is now looking at them. As Massey asserts, the event of place is not only what has happened and will happen but also what is happening now and will continue to happen in this place. In her own words: 'The elements of this "place" will be, at different times and speeds, again dispersed' (2005: 141).

The shots of the old church through the window at various times during the construction process of the building remind us of the time process and of the temporality attached to the space. Towards the end of the film, a new resident visiting his possible future flat does not like the view from the same window of the old church, nor the view of other old buildings with washing lines. In a similar scene, a father who has come with his wife and little daughter to view one of the flats gets annoyed and concerned when he sees that his little daughter is on the balcony greeting a neighbour in the opposite building. We see how he immediately urges his wife to get the girl inside and stop this type of communication. These scenes reveal how the future residents already dislike the aesthetics and the historic past of the quarter, so we can foresee the characteristics and idiosyncrasies that will move out of El Raval when different neighbours move in who will refuse to communicate with people of another social class on an equal basis.

However, this site, while open and in progress, gives and receives while it belongs to everybody in El Raval. A good example of this is shown when we see the children playing houses with the construction materials; they create their own space, coming into the building on weekends when the builders are not there. However, some of the builders discover the play area and want to know who has been there without permission. We see how the little girl connects immediately with another builder who knows about the games but decides not to give her away. Similarly, this space is still being contested when we see Juani and Iván sleeping in a little corner of the open building site, since they have not got any other place to be. The shot only shows them embracing, under some blankets and cardboard, portraying their last attempts to remain attached to their old home as holding on to the space that can still be theirs while the building is not completed.

Moreover, this incomplete building becomes an important part of the lives of the builders as well, especially the foreman, who is in charge of the site, just as Guerín himself is of the film. The foreman speaks of the building as his and refers to it as something that has to be looked after and cared about like ‘a girlfriend’. He also tells this to his son while teaching him the process of drawing and measuring to complete the stairs. However the building also belongs somehow to the neighbours who are continuously shown looking at it, entertained or concerned, by its view, its changes and its development. There are also scenes that portray the connections between the workers in the construction and the nearby neighbours: for example, we see a builder being amused by a little baby on one of the balconies, exchanging looks and games with her, or the already mentioned courtship between a young girl while she is hanging clothes on her balcony and the young builder. These connections between the building and the inhabitants of the nearby flats suggest the notion that the building is naturally still a part of the rest of the quarter, still deeply integrated in it thanks to the human relationships that create the nexus between the space and the body.

One of the film’s greatest achievements is how it shows space being negotiated and becoming what humans make it to be. It also shows how these human bodies integrate themselves with the outside by coming out from the inside of their homes to meet with the outside (the construction still open and by extension, the rest of the quarter). Together, it all merges in a space that is still open to the outside but will inevitably be closed when the redevelopment of the building is completed. In other words, and following Rancière’s theories, consensus will be established once the construction is finished, but, in the meantime, what Guerín achieves is to create a transitional

dissensus, a dissensus that will eventually be destroyed but that is actively working while it is in a process of construction, giving the characters the ownership of the space for that period of time for as long as the film lasts too. However, unlike the temporary dissensus arising during the construction of the building, the dissensus that arises during the construction of the film is permanent and will last for as long the film exists and is viewed by audiences that, by making sense and constructing meaning out of it, will continually enact the dissensus that comes with it.

6.5 Migrant Identities and Contrasted Masculinities

As already pointed out above, *En construcción* is not a film about immigration per se, but it does present two Moroccan builders in an innovative way. Abdel Aziz and Abdelsalam are both working in the building under construction. Interactions and contrasts between these two men and their work colleagues bring out questions about ethnicity, class and gender differences. Guerín has said that Abdel Aziz el Mountassir is one of the best-read people that he knows. He likes poetry and speaks to Santiago about his philosophical ideas on capitalism and religion. In this way, Abdel Aziz helps Guerín to challenge the stereotype of the illegal, silent and uneducated Moroccan worker. As Sarah Ahmed indicates, the term 'encounter' suggests a meeting 'which involves surprise and conflict' (2000: 6). It is necessary to observe to what extent these meetings among the characters of *En construcción* create not only encounters that allow the migrants to challenge stereotypes and empower them as active subjects of knowledge, but also to show the tensions and conflicts that occur within marginal groups due to the fact that conflict is part of human nature.

The following scenes provide some examples of how this fluidity helps the representation of contrasted racial masculinities with the aim of offering a new rendering of the Maghrebian migrant. Especially relevant for the analysis are the scenes or, in Ahmed's words, 'encounters', between the figures of Abdel Aziz, Santiago and Abdelsalam. The two Moroccans and Santiago share their time and thoughts in this open space. Thus, their estrangement is shared by the three of them and brings them even closer to us as viewers. Ahmed refers to Michael Dillon's ideas on 'estrangement' as that which brings human beings together instead of being that which divides us. He argues that 'estrangement of human beings is integral to their conditions as being here as the beings that they are' (Cited in Ahmed, 2000: 93). Nevertheless, we observe how these three men's masculinities are sharply contrasted, which exposes them as contingent. As Daniel Coleman states:

> Male hegemony in Western culture has long maintained its power by attempting to remain invisible, by positioning itself as the standard of civil normality against which the differences of 'femininity' and 'effeminacy'– not to mention 'barbarity' and 'savagery' – are thrown into sharp relief (1993).

The camera hardly moves and shot compositions are simple in design, leading the viewer to concentrate on the characters and their words. Abdel Aziz challenges traditionally assumed gender expectations associated with migrant masculinities, being presented with a soft and expressive masculinity and unsettling Santiago with his words and his poetic, gentle discourse. These meetings between Abdel Aziz and Santiago are remarkable in the way both masculinities

are contrasted, the Moroccan migrant poetically and philosophically communicating with the much harder, illiterate Spanish Santiago. These unexpected philosophical talks from Abdel Aziz create surprise not only for the Spanish builder himself but also for the viewer. Later on, Santiago seems to be more comfortable with his co-worker and opens up about his own feelings of loneliness. Abdel Aziz tells Santiago that in Morocco men court women with poetic conversation; when Santiago replies that he goes straight to the point, Abdel tells him that this different gender interaction is only because he is not Moroccan. Therefore, he explicitly states that the courtship game between men and women in his culture is different mainly due to sociocultural reasons. The more effeminate and sophisticated Moroccan masculinity is set against the harsher macho-like Spanish one, throwing each other into relief and therefore becoming exposed as contingent. Both men are estranged and alienated – even at the site – they are always working on their own or with Abdelsalam. They also communicate in very different ways to Adbelsalam: when Santiago tells the young boy off for using the balance roughly, he is cold and does not even look Abdelsalam in the eye, but Abdel Aziz then comes after him and reassures him, asking him nicely about his experiences with snow.

They all three have their lunch together in what seems to be a different level from the rest of the builders. Santiago tells the Moroccans about what he does at home: we learn that he lives alone, drinks alcohol and does very little more. Guerín also wants to show that the alienation and solitude that these men feel in their private lives matches what they experience outside, although at the construction site they have each other to share the alienation and solitude; however Guerín intensifies their alienation by keeping them apart from the rest of the builders for most of the film. As the three men spend their lunch break in the open building against the landscape of the city surrounding them, the outside landscape of the city enters the building and the inside of the building becomes part of the outside. City and body become closely connected so one becomes part of the other. In relation to this symbolic movement from and to the building, we see how it comes and goes from every side of the building, above, below and to and from the sides.

The following scene exemplifies how Guerín brings the outside from above into the inside of the building and the body, and how the inside of the body also goes out in the shape of memories. While Abdelsalam is building a wall, snow starts to fall. Abdel Aziz asks him if it is the first time he has seen snow and recalls his own experience when he encountered snow for the first time when he was just a little boy. Abdel Aziz addresses him first in Spanish and later in Arabic for the first time (2012: 55). Their common language helps them to connect more intimately, and hearing them speak about this personal experience in their mother tongue helps to break with the monolingualism of the film, which, in turn, gives an opportunity to the viewer to learn more about the men's own language and culture and to share this experience with them. Besides, Guerín achieves a remarkable lyricism in the scene offering a close up of the snowflakes falling and melting in Abdel Aziz's dark hair. The visual contrast takes the viewer to Abdel's own past memories, and he says to Santiago poetically that 'nature is using snow to whisper to Barcelona'. Guerín creates a beautiful, poetic image of snow falling and melting, like whispering, on Abdel's black hair, with a haptic quality achieved through the long, extreme close-up of the whiteness melting into the blackness of the man's hair, as if his head was being filled with nature, blending with his poetry and the memories of his homeland. This powerful and poetic imagery merges Abdel Aziz's body and memory with the city and with nature, enhancing the connection of the human body with the space that contains it, not only here in Barcelona but also linking through

this space and temporal dimension with Morocco and the migrant's childhood. We see the snow falling, surrounding the buildings of the city and entering the construction. The whiteness of the snow seems to suggest the purification of the space and becomes part of it, coming from the sky like whispers to the city and inside the building.

Similarly, this dispersive fluidity and transitional nature of the human body connected to the city space is strongly portrayed in the shots showing Abdel Aziz and Santiago working at night in the building. Abdel has placed the torch strategically on the floor so they both can work together with the same light, and their shades are reflected against the next building. Interestingly, Abdel Aziz asks Santiago about his previous job as a gravedigger, which introduces a conversation about graves and death. We hear the men talking but only see their shadows reflected in the walls of the nearby building and, even more strikingly, in the faces of the neighbours who are coming to their windows to look at the outside world. Their bodies connect like this with the bodies of the neighbours and with the very surface of the buildings.

The symbolism is potent and pertinent. As Marsh puts it: 'a gravedigger quite literally carves out a space in the earth to be filled. Filled, moreover, with a body' (2004: 61). Both men's bodies become suddenly shadows at work and viewers cannot establish who is who, they are both bending and working as builders of new flats for human bodies to inhabit the new space, so the film clearly demonstrates the analogy between digging a grave and building a flat, both spaces serving to locate the human body. Besides, this symbolism works to make their two male bodies blurred by confusion; both figures are equals, connected by loneliness and alienation. These images also work to undermine the hardness, boundedness and containment usually associated with masculinity. The reflection of the two shadows on the old building is a projection of the transitional dimension of these men. The scene helps the viewer to reflect on the spiritual side of human beings and how equal we all are independently of race or culture when it comes to the human body and its transitory life. The scene connects buildings and humans, space and body, life and death, present and past. Guerín creates a powerful analogy between flats and graves, both meant to contain the human body. The construction is connected to an old necropolis, and this suggests that, independently of the passage of time, in this case, of the layers of the soil, the past always comes back. In this scene the bodies of Santiago and Abdel are strongly visually connected to the construction space, as well as to the city itself. The transitory character of the human body is reinforced independently of race, gender or ethnic origin, creating a sense of equality among the characters of El Raval and giving them the right and power to possess and occupy the space which the camera has provided for them.

En construcción also shows the conflicts arising within the building and, as I said before, the site is also a site of conflict and struggle and portrays how these tensions are part of human nature. We witness heated arguments arising between two of the Spanish builders in charge who are disagreeing on a specific matter concerning the construction process. Similarly, Guerín shows how the two migrants also share a moment of tension. Abdelsalam, the younger Moroccan, shows a driving ambition when he takes the plans of the building site and tries to learn about them. Abdel Aziz snatches them from him and warns him to not even try to learn because, if he does, he will lose his job. We assume Abdel Aziz has been in Spain long enough to understand that one has to be submissive and not show ambition in order to keep a job, but this patronising attitude frustrates Abdelsalam's eagerness to improve his life and gives Abdel Aziz the power to

make decisions for him. By presenting us with these tensions, Guerín also shows how marginal subjects can also estrange other even more marginal subjects and thus reinforce stereotypes.

At the same time, Abdelsalam shows notable qualities, especially when compared to the young Spanish man, Iván. The contrast is highlighted when the camera focuses on the wall that Abdelsalam has built, how interested he is in learning and improving his position in life while the young Iván is static, passive and shows no interest in finding a job. The stagnation of the young Spaniard Iván contrasts sharply with Abdelsalam's determination, wanting to understand the plans of the building and refusing to drink alcohol while in his break at work. By explicitly contrasting both masculinities, the mentally weak Iván and the solid, hard-working Abdelsalam, the film is trying to create a positive image of the migrant. This in turn could reinforce stereotypes with regard to migrants, since as Stam and Spence remind us, 'the insistence on "positive images", finally, obscures the fact that "nice" images might at times be as pernicious as overtly degrading ones, providing a bourgeois facade for paternalism, a more pervasive racism' (1983: 3).

Nevertheless, Guerín purposely presents Juani invoking the construction of stereotypes and in this way subverting them, since the director exposes them as socially constructed in common with everything else in the film. The scene takes place on the terrace of the building where Juani and Iván live. They both observe Abdelsalam working, Iván sitting down and Juani scratching his skull. In the following shot, the camera follows Abdelsalam carrying heavy metal beams, wearing only dark jeans. This scene is carefully staged and it reveals how between different marginal ethnic groups there are also tensions associated with racist stereotypes. In these images, the white Spaniard Iván is sitting down witnessing how his girlfriend is praising the body of the darker Moroccan Abdelsalam. She is herself a Spanish gypsy, so her cultural and ethnic heritage has been considered as marginal for centuries in Spain as well. Nevertheless, she wants to prompt a response in Iván, she wants to make him jealous so that he goes to work to make a living too.

As Juani is using the figure of Abdelsalam to trigger Iván's change of attitude towards his life, particularly work, she is performing, as she knows how to, a projection of ideas that are cultured-based in relation to conceptions that Spaniards have with regard to North Africans. As the viewer has had the chance to observe Abdelsalam and his eagerness to work and ambition to learn, and also his good-natured character, Juani's comments can be understood as a way that Guerín demystifies or criticises the misconceptions with regard to young Arab migrants, because Juani is clearly not really interested sexually or in any other way in Abdelsalam but only in trying to make Iván jealous so he will react and go to work, as young Abdelsalam is doing. In this way, Abdelsalam becomes the example that Juani is giving Iván of what type of man she wants. Besides, the camera does not dwell on Abdelsalam's body enough to objectivise it and sexualise it to the extent where he would become the viewer's object of desire. The focus is more on Juani and Iván and how they are struggling to survive in the hostile conditions that are being imposed on them by the gentrification process in El Raval.

6.6 Conclusion

The building being constructed arises with the intention of redeveloping the marginal quarter of El Raval that will become the end of this place as it has been known for a long period of time. The intention to embellish this marginal area of Barcelona with new residents and new buildings implies the construction of the consensus that Rancière refers to, since it will distribute the space according to the interests of more privileged subjects of society while getting rid of the undesired ones. What Guerín achieves in *En construcción* is the transformation of this symbolic tower of consensus and its conversion into the opposite: the construction of a tower of dissensus that emerges thanks to the filmic treatment that Guerín gives to this space in the periphery of Barcelona.

En construcción empowers the locals of El Raval by means of creating scenes where the body blends with space and time inside a building that is being constructed, as the film itself is, as open and inclusive. Characteristics found in accented cinema, like the transitional quality of body, space and time, enhance the possibilities of disrupting the consensus that the tower initially signifies and creates a film built in the margins about a marginal area of the city. In this space, everything seems changeable, fluid and ephemeral, which challenges rigid and hegemonic structures of power. This building under construction is portrayed as if floating in the air, breathing in and out the city, as, for example, when the building receives the snow from above, or in people's looks and interactions with it, to and from the sides, and even in the discovery of the remains from down below. The camera placed in the building looks at the nearby buildings as well as at the faces that look out of them. The snow receives poetic treatment and is understood in relation to Abdel Aziz's past memories in his homeland. And the remains are given different dimensions and possibilities not only thanks to the comments made by the locals, raising questions of historical memory, and race, but also thanks to the filmic treatment of the scenes, sometimes shifting the pleasure of looking to the inhabitants and frustrating our desire to look, at other times creating surprising lyricism and beauty in a building site where grey concrete colours and metallic noises become the unsuspected pleasurable sensorial experience in which Guerín transforms the simplicity of daily life routines, thus changing what at first sight would be noise and chaos into a world of detailed beauty with all its complexities.

The film in itself entails a contestation of documentary techniques, its self-reflexivity and its connections to the building process itself keep the viewer establishing connections between fact and fiction, breaking established rules and ways of seeing. Gender role conventions are also exposed as social constructions, as we have seen in the scenes with Juani and Iván and of the young builder and the girl on the balcony. By means of challenging our assumptions and frustrating our expectations as viewers, Guerín also gives us more opportunities to think freely and understand the meanings that can be constructed, making us an active part of the construction of the building and of the film itself.

7. Barcelona with the Eyes of the Other in *Si nos dejan* (Ana Torres, 2004)

7.1 Introduction

Si nos dejan (*If They Let Us*), by Argentinian filmmaker Ana Torres, presents an exploration of the subject of immigration in Barcelona. Torres, who was at the moment of filming an undocumented migrant herself, chooses to include herself along with the rest of the migrant community from the beginning of the film, starting with the title itself. This is the explanation she offers:

> Three years ago I became a migrant in Spain. I experienced and keep experiencing in my own flesh the ups and downs of starting a new life in which, by definition, I have a different status from that of the great majority: I am foreign. In Barcelona I got to meet people from very different countries, all experiencing that same reality of being an immigrant [...]. On the other hand, I noticed that any information provided by the current mass media about the situation of immigration in Spain was given as statistics and was quite far from accurately describing the reality that I could observe every day [...]. The numbers masked faces and experiences, reflecting only the problems of the state but not those of the people (quoted in Rodríguez, 2010: 49).

Following Mathien's review of Rancière's work and applying those ideas to how Torres constructs the meaning of *Si nos dejan,* it can be argued that this documentary starts from the need of the director to express those concerns, which she felt had been neglected 'by acts of rule'. In this way, she can express her claims and 'have the effect of shifting the way in which the social is perceived' (2010: 369). Thus, Torres' documentary works as political contestation to show the new political subjects, or as Mathien would put it 'the new we, a new subject of manifestation, where there had only been unperceived anonymity' (2010: 369).

Torres reflects on the difficulties involved in the process, openly criticises the system and tries to shorten distances between cultures. Torres is, therefore, the citizen whose act demands recognition, to be perceived as a new subject, requiring an engagement and ultimately a response. For Rancière, 'the aesthetic experience is an experience that is ripe with political possibility because it reconfigures the sensory capacities of those who participate' (Mathien, 2010: 371). *Si nos dejan* affords visibility to the participants, and so Torres and the migrant characters become the 'new we' whose visibility potentially reconfigures the social and political system.

Si nos dejan offers a variety of voices, intermingling faces, speech and music. This documentary poses questions and presents doubts, fears and expectations about the multiculturality developing in the city, the racism and the conflicts arising between locals and migrants. Moreover, it explores the way Spanish and European immigration policies fail to create the space and the

resources for integration, also reflecting on the problem of the restrictive policies in the European borders towards those migrants coming from 'poorer' countries.

Torres takes us on a journey not only around her own life and migration experiences in Barcelona, but also around the lives and experiences of the very different characters. She interviews women from Argentina (Cata), Venezuela (Mary Carmen) and Ecuador (Juani) and men from Ukraine (Andrej), Ghana (Nana) and USA (Ben). Torres also presents briefly some Cuban men and women as well as some native Spaniards living in Barcelona.

Varela-Zapata (2009: 82) suggests that some films dealing with migrants' struggles in Spain have contributed to the installation of new social conceptions that may have led to the new measures by the Socialist Government enabling migrants to legalize their status, especially the one in 2005, starting 7th February as the first day of the three month period during which the Spanish Government enabled illegal migrants residing in Spain to legalize their status. *Si nos dejan* describes this problematic of legalization through the characters' narratives, at times through a hidden camera which reveals the conditions and situations that the legal system creates for these migrants who find themselves struggling for years before they can obtain the documents they need to be able to find a job in the new country.

I will use Michel de Certeau's description of spatial configurations, particularly his account of 'strategies' and 'tactics', since I consider this 'notion' of special practices to be complementary to Rancière's dissensus and consensus, and it will help us understand how Torres' film opens up the space of the city for political argumentation. In his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Michel de Certeau provides an analysis of how individuals (consumers or users) use 'tactics' in order to make use of the space within an organized system of disciplinary rules. De Certeau defines a tactic as 'determined by the absence of power just as a strategy is organized by the postulation of power' (1984: 38). Rancière's and de Certeau's ideas will deepen our understanding of how *Si nos dejan* constructs urban socio-spatial processes, challenging and disrupting dominant and fixed structures of power regarding marginal identities and politics, thus creating a documentary that can stage scenes of dissensus, enabling viewers to see and hear those who do not normally count as being qualified to speak because of their places and the functions of their activities in society.

I argue that Torres creates an accented film that works as an arena of contestation and a scene of dissensus thanks to the use of a dynamic political narrative discourse, strengthened by her use of cinematic techniques. I will demonstrate that, not only due to Torres' position as a migrant herself but also thanks to the formal elements she employs, she creates a documentary which functions as political speech, a new political argumentation, one that allows her to give voice to, empower and represent the various migrant characters in the film, although not without hierarchies in this representation, since some gain more agency than others.

7.2 Montage in an Accented Essay Film

The migrant characters in *Si nos dejan* are brought together particularly through the use of montage, with which Torres not only connects continents and countries visually by animated sequences involving planes and a spinning globe, but also, and more importantly, by using montage to connect speeches and faces continuously at a very high speed in which sentences are sometimes made by means of joining one or two words from each character's speech.

Torres constructs a universe of movement and human relations in continuous transformation, sharing many of the characteristics of accented cinema, as Naficy states:

> For accented filmmakers, the choice of what film to make is often determined less by economic necessity than by their personal quest, which strengthens the autobiographical and authorial dimension of their work (2001: 72)

As Rodríguez points out, 'Torres announces her arrival from the outset and her interventions are constant and deliberate' (2010: 54). Her presence is reinforced by continuous images of her face, her shadow riding the streets of Barcelona with her bike, and even by her voice-over ('I am Ana, I came in a plane via Madrid') and a shot of her Argentine passport. *Si nos dejan* can also be considered an essayistic film, since Torres makes herself the central matter of the documentary, and the camera is used in a different way to the traditional documentary practice.

For Nora M. Alter, the term 'essay' is used 'because it signifies a composition that is in between categories and as such is transgressive, digressive, playful, contradictory, and political' (2002: 7-8). According to Giannetti, for instance, 'an essay is neither fiction nor fact, but a personal investigation involving both the passion and intellect of the author' (cited in Rascaroli 2008: 24). Torres is, then, the enunciator trying to convey an argument to the spectator. Following Rascaroli, 'if the enunciator is able to convey an argument and enter into a dialogue with the spectator through images unaccompanied by commentary, we can call that an essay film' (2008: 37).

Like many accented filmmakers, Torres makes the inscription of her authorial figure very direct and evident from the beginning, her body visible and her voice audible at times, and at others more indirectly through the use of the strategically edited shots of characters' gestures as comments to what other characters have said. Various examples of this can be found in the film, for instance, when Nana finds himself disturbed by another Maghrebian migrant who has asked him for his heated water. Nana refuses to give it to him at first, but then we notice the pressure he is feeling, thanks to the quick shot of Andrej's face that adds tension to the scene. Then, a restless Nana shouts back asking him if he wants the water to have a shower, thus implying that he is somehow forced to give away his hot water, either to avoid any possible conflicts or in a need to show the audience he is a nice and generous guy. This connection also reinforces the way Torres joins the characters together, intensifying a constructed fellowship among them. Another example of parallel montage is when Torres introduces the image of the rabbits in a cage, when Nana and Andrej are narrating their boat travel experience: the editing establishes a

simile comparison between both men and the rabbits. But this is not the only occasion when Torres uses images of animals to compare them with humans. There are shots of stray cats in Torras i Bages, or stray dogs in the streets of Barcelona. The effect created stresses the inhuman living conditions of undocumented migrants whose lives can be compared to those of these animals living in the streets or feeling trapped and without freedom like those caged rabbits.

7.3 The Construction of 'Us' versus 'Them'

Torres creates an aesthetic experience that confers visibility and gives voice to the migrants in the film. These migrant characters are social actors performing a role, they are representing themselves but in a new environment, and with new circumstances. Thus, they need to recreate an image of themselves that fits in the new space. As Gayatri Spivak and Sneja Gunew propose, 'the whole notion of authenticity, of the authentic migrant experience, is one that comes to us constructed by hegemonic voices' (cited by Martínez-Carazo, 2005: 272). Nevertheless, Torres belongs to the same 'outlaw' or 'subaltern' position as her characters, and this helps to shorten distances and may allow for the characters in her film to speak more freely, thus entitling them to recreate themselves in a less fabricated manner according to their own identities, because the migrant filmmaker, sharing many of the feelings that the characters have, is able to choose those testimonies that more powerfully transmit those shared feelings. Moreover, the viewer is aware from the beginning of Torres' difficulties and marginality, of how we imagine the behind the camera relationship with the characters to be one that is most probably built on trust, and in this way, we can understand their voices as true reflections of what they feel and think. As Nana is being interviewed by somebody who is also in a similar, although not equal, illegal situation, he may present himself more as he really is, as he really feels, than if he were being interviewed by somebody who did not share this marginal or outlaw position; this could be for various reasons, like lack of trust, fear of being reported, of being misjudged or even for reasons concerning shame. One example of this is when Nana says to Torres, 'we are frustrated psychologically, do you understand? Yeah!' The use of 'we' serves to exemplify that Nana also includes Torres as part of the 'we'.

Nana introduces himself and Torres shows this introduction at the very end of the film. She wants viewers to be reminded of the essence of the character, and the redundancy comes to reinforce Nana's previous appearances as a means to empower him, but also and more interestingly to remind the viewers of his need to introduce himself continuously, since a Black African man in Spain is an unknown and non-understood man who will always need to start again.

Nana talks about his life in fear of the police who come very often to ask him for his papers. These same feelings of fear about police are shared by Torres, who we see earlier in the film frightened to be interviewed by a policeman when she is in hospital after her fall from the bike. She also tells us more about these fears in voice-over: she refers to a fear of losing something, although she has nothing, but at least she owns the power of the difficult decision she has already made, the decision to leave Argentina and to come to Spain. Therefore, to a certain extent, both share the psychological effect of being physically and, consequently, mentally displaced, of hiding and fearing discovery. This implies a need to survive under hostile circumstances because

they do not have the legal documents that could give them the same opportunities that others like nationals and legal migrants have in the city. But Nana's dignity becomes reified through his speech, he demands an opportunity to improve his life, he is looking for work, he is doing this out of pure necessity to feed his family, who the viewer can see through a close-up of a photograph. Nana demands the rights that other people have and he does not have, but as Todd May explains, for Rancière democratic politics is not about what people demand but about what people do (2008: 152), and Torres is doing something by showing us all these characters and their struggles, but Nana, as well as the other Africans who live in Torras i Bages, seems powerless and frustrated by the lack of opportunities he has in Barcelona, a place where, as he himself says, he needs 'to hide and become invisible to avoid problems'.

Nevertheless, Torres demonstrates that even for legal migrants there are barriers to break. Mary Carmen, from Venezuela but whose parents are Galicians who migrated to America, refers to the 'rabiecilla' ('a kind of little anger', my translation) she feels due to being in a place where she feels racism, and Juani, from Ecuador, sings the song 'Si nos dejan' on the beach, where Torres herself openly includes herself by using it as the title of her film. *Si nos dejan* (*If They Let Us*) means the 'request or appeal to the system that imposes the norms that prevent the acts of speech of migrants' (Rodríguez, 2010: 54). Torres, then, is trying to claim the space for these acts of speech to take place and be heard, she is claiming the space for herself and for the rest of her fellow migrant characters. As Rancière argues:

> Traditionally, in order to deny the political quality of a category – workers, women and so on – all that was required was to assert that they belonged to a 'domestic' space that was separated from public life, one from which only groans or cries expressing suffering, hunger or anger could emerge, but not actual speech demonstrating a shared aesthesis (2010: 38).

It can be argued, then, that as Rancière explains, Torres is making visible that which so far has been unseen or unheard, making it audible as speech and not as mere noise.

In *Si nos dejan*, the cinematic techniques employed reinforce the ethnic and cultural mixing, as protagonists' speeches are intermingled in a montage of rapid and fragmented scenes. Torres uses her bike as a connector device that provides structure to the various shots, and the images of the spinning wheels add power and impetus to the visual experience by adding movement, instability, speed and, to a certain extent, confusion. Each character is introduced in a similar way after being on screen. Torres introduces herself with a voice-over telling us how she came to Spain by plane via Madrid. She also uses the same device to describe the journey of Ben, with the image of an animated plane moving across the world map from the USA to Spain. They both have come in the same way, unlike the migrants from poorer countries from Africa, who need to resort to the only way to enter Spain, the 'patera' or 'cayuco' which is a type of boat, risking their lives and finding death in many instances. Torres shows that there are many different routes and modes of transport involved in the migratory process, but also that there is a big difference between how migrants are treated, depending on the country they come from.

With this specific comparison, Torres establishes a link between the USA and Argentina, and the similar characteristics of the journey, which is paradoxical since once they arrive the treatment they receive is very different. The white American is considered a better citizen, as he does not need to legalize his citizenship and can find a job easily as a private teacher of English. On the other hand, Torres struggles to find a job and needs to resort to cleaning houses. The comparison of Ben and Nana is also poignant: USA citizen Ben has come to Spain primarily to have a free herniated disc operation because he cannot afford to have it done at home, whereas Nana has only come to make a living and feed his family, but he cannot even be treated for his diabetes. While the former is filmed in the comfort of a hospital room being looked after by a doctor, Nana is being treated in the shelter by a voluntary doctor who advises him to find a clinic where he can be monitored for his chronic disease, but Nana probably fears to be reported if he goes to a GP, as he does not have the NHS card yet.

Torres connects their experiences by continuously linking their voices and faces, and this contributes to the creation of a sense of community sharing the migratory experience, but at the same time it draws attention to how unfair the Spanish system is in its treatment of human beings' medical needs, allotting them resources on the basis of nationality or skin colour. Ben could be considered to be 'milking the system' but he is not because he is white and comes from the USA, so he is entitled to use Spain's National Health Service at ease and his passport has not even been checked. Nana, on the other hand, feels he cannot access the National Health Service, even though he has a chronic disease. Torres reveals how both men are not treated on equal terms under any circumstances. Accented characteristics in this film, like struggles, fears, feelings of displacement, and continuous movement in search of a home and of an identity, are reinforced by Torres' use of montage, which joins all the characters in a constructed solidarity, empowering each other and giving them a common stage to speak louder so they can be heard better.

Si nos dejan also explores the way in which space is imagined and redistributed with regard to undocumented migrants. Torres shows the demolitions of Torras i Bages where Nana has been living. Torras i Bages is a Barcelona metro station in the North East District called Sant Andreu. Here, in some abandoned military buildings, which are the property of the Ministry for Defence, these mostly undocumented migrants have found their space. Nana shows us how he is living without electricity or water. Later he explains that demolitions are taking place to get rid of migrants. While we see images of demolished walls, Nana says 'there will be no buildings and there will be no people and that will be the end of Torras i Bages, then we will move onto another life'. He is determined to stay in Spain because, as he explains, he is tired of travelling and continually starting over and over again looking for work to support his children back in Ghana. Images of photographs of his children help viewers to become emotionally closer to Nana and to better understand his story. Nana refers to 'true Europe' when he asks us to have a look around his surroundings and realize that, in fact, this is not what he expected to find. Nana tells us that he does not feel he is in real Europe yet: the place where he is living is not the place he was expecting, as his vision of Europe was different, but his comment implies he is still expecting to find the true Europe he came to find. This space of Torras i Bages represents how the migrants have made use of 'tactics': they have appropriated the space that on paper belongs to the State, but it is now no longer a former military base but the shelter where undocumented migrants have improvised their temporary homes.

The images of the men heating water or transporting it in supermarket trolleys should embarrass anybody who thinks Spain is a civilised country. As Nana points out, 'this is not Africa, this is not Asia, this is Europe, this is a land of liberty'. Torres intends to unsettle audiences at the same time as urging us to think about the need to work together towards the creation of a better world, a more unified society where we help one another in cooperation. A scene that exemplifies this is when Nana tells us that Europe should be alert and help poorer nations because when 'your neighbour is in pain and cannot sleep, you will hear the shouting and you won't be able to sleep either'. His speech alerts the viewer to the notion of Europe and what it means. What is true Europe? For Nana it is a place where he can work and live like any other person. His perspective on Spain and Europe from the shelters in Torras i Bages raises awareness of the scope of the situation. Nana unsettles our conceptions about civilised Europe and makes us wonder what true Europe means or should mean. He also expresses how he needs to confine himself to invisibility, of his need to hide if he wants to stay safe. As we can appreciate, Ben, from Seattle, and Nana, from Ghana, are very different characters. Torres mixes both men's images and speeches to reinforce their shared argument about how poverty leads to crime because of the faulty system. By means of juxtaposing the two men, Torres shortens distances between individuals and reflects upon a very delicate subject, letting Ben say the words 'poverty leads to crime', and showing Nana explaining it is not his fault when they have nothing to eat some days. Torres places Ben in the position of helping Nana's argument as a means to strengthen both men's arguments. Both men are helping each other through Torres' use of montage with the objective of empowering them both and creating a kind of constructed solidarity.

For Rancière, consensus is in 'the end of politics, the return to the normal state of things, the non-existence of politics' (2010: 43), and 'it consists in the reduction of democracy to the way of life or ethos of a society - the dwelling and lifestyle of a specific group' (2010: 72). Dissensus, Rancière claims, is the essence of politics, a political demonstration that places one world in another. Moreover, 'it is the construction of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds' (2010: 39). In his analysis of Rancière's ideas, Schaap says that 'the sans papiers enact the right to have rights when they speak as if they had the same rights as the French nationals they address' (2011: 16):

> By acting as if they have the rights that they lack, the sans papiers actualize their political equality. It is this dimension of their action that is world disclosing. For it puts two worlds into one: the world in which 'no-one is illegal' into the world in which there are sans papiers (2011: 22).

Torres achieves this construction of separate worlds every time she shows Nana expressing his ideas about his living conditions or when we see him in the shelter of Torras i Bages. For instance, he talks about how he feels like a prisoner, making himself invisible in order to avoid problems. However, despite the world he is forced to be in, where he becomes an invisible person, he is talking to us about it, and we can see a juxtaposition of his life and the other characters' lives, and all this is precisely what makes him visible as a political subject, enacting the rights he does not have but that he also has by referring to them as the rights to which he is entitled.

Nana invites us to look around his improvised home. What we see is a wasteland with no water or electricity, a chaos that unsettles national audiences' preconceptions of their country. He invites us to look around and think. He asks: 'Is this a dreamland? Is this somewhere to dream about? Is this Europe?' We observe, through Torres' camera and Nana's words, the space where he feels forced to hide, where he says he 'is not a prisoner but has nothing to do and has nowhere to go'. We witness the degrading living conditions he suffers without food, water, electricity or even access to a medical card to be properly treated for his diabetes. Thanks to the characters, especially Nana, Torres shows how this shrinkage of political space affects the undocumented migrants, especially in Torras i Bages. In this way, Nana has been able to show his life here, to denounce and complain about the lack of resources that he is experiencing in this supposed 'land of liberty', that he thought Europe would be.

Another example is offered when Juani is on the beach selling drinks and she tells us that she knows the police will come to find her many more times, that they will take her drinks away and give her a fine, but that she will carry on living like this because she has to. The individuals presented in the film show a political awareness with regard to their lives as migrants in Spain. They know exactly what they are missing, what they need and what they are deprived of. But they also openly talk and complain about it to the camera, as well as telling us about their hopes for a better future that is still to come. As Schaap states, 'for Rancière, politics is fundamentally about contesting political exclusion by enacting equality' (2011: 3). And this equality is enacted precisely when the characters are talking about the inequalities they know they are suffering, and especially through the way Torres constructs them as members of the same group, creating this equality that does not really exist in real life.

Rancière refers to the Rights of Man and differentiates them from Human Rights, speaking of 'groups or individuals that can make something of these rights (Rights of Man) to construct a dissensus against the denial of rights they suffer', and in this way 'they really have these rights' (2010: 71). The Rights of Man are the real rights of real groups that provide them with a solid identity and a recognized place in the society. Schaap refers to Rancière's ideas on the Rights of Man and states that:

> The subject of human rights emerges through political action and speech that seeks to verify the existence of those rights that are inscribed within the self-understanding of the political community. In doing so, political subjects demonstrate the reality of both their equality as speaking animals and of their inequality within the social order (2001: 16).

Torres highlights the social struggles of these men and women and by doing so, she is enacting their rights, enacting equality, contesting political exclusion. When Nana refers to being black as something that he cannot change because God made him like this (he cannot make himself white to have an easier life), he is acknowledging how the colour of his skin is an impediment to having the same rights as those with a different skin colour. Nana's self-awareness and his reflections on his expectations about Spain as part of Europe show an understanding of political agency and political life, and this awareness and open discussion of it with Torres is what contributes to empowering him as a political subject, creating a scenario that challenges racist

assumptions and providing the viewer with a political argumentation. In turn, this provides the characters with their natural rights, rights that belong to everybody by birth, independently of ethnic origin, social status, race or gender.

Similarly, in order to understand the dialogue that Torres establishes with the viewer, it is necessary to analyse how the spatio-temporal relationship is constructed in *Si nos dejan,* particularly with regard to Spain's migratory and colonial past. Ballesteros refers to 'the need to create a collective memory of traumatic historic episodes in order to transcend the chronic amnesia that has historically characterized Spanishness and, by doing so, reshape the national identity' (2005: 11). Torres refers to Spanish collective memory in various scenes, for example when Bolivian Norma Falconi, who works for the association that helps migrants to obtain legal documentation in Barcelona, tells Torres that Spain has forgotten that it was the great country that emigrated elsewhere. Again, Mary Carmen, whose parents are Galicians who migrated to Venezuela, says that many of the migrants who come to Spain today from Latin America are the sons and daughters of those who migrated there years ago. She also thinks that Spanish migrants did not suffer the same racism that migrants in Spain suffer nowadays and that things were much easier for them back then. Similarly, Cata, who has lived in Germany as a migrant as well, establishes a comparison between Spaniards and Maghrebian people, saying that Spaniards who migrated to Germany years ago were considered in the same way Maghrebian people are considered nowadays in Spain, 'the worst of the worst'. In this way Torres provides a reliable look into the migratory past of Spain through Cata and Mary Carmen, because their parents are among those Spanish migrants who had to move to Germany and Latin America searching for a better life. The effect it creates gives the viewer the idea that it does not matter if you are white or black, from Eastern Europe or Africa, that leaving one's own place involves finding many physical and psychological obstacles that are intrinsic to the migratory journey.

Torres presents many other moments when the past and present clash by looking at colonial and postcolonial practices. For instance, the images of photos with two Latin American men advertising a Latin Party with the head titles reading 'Y quién le pidió papeles a Colón?' ('And who asked Colombus for documents?' my translation). This image takes national viewers right back to the colonial past to try to establish a bridge which will help them to understand better the present circumstances of migrants in Spain. *Si nos dejan* seeks to criticize the capitalist society we live in. Although some positive aspects of the Spanish social system are mentioned, like those related to medical security and hospitals, the film criticizes big Spanish companies like for example Repsol, which established itself in Argentina in 1999. However, it is necessary to point out that in 2012 the Argentinian Government seized Repsol's assets and in 2014, the company ended its operations in the country.

Torres stresses her point by showing images of the statue of Columbus pointing his finger towards America. This scene serves as an introduction to what is going to be an even stronger evaluation of how these companies exploit migrants in Spain. The ironic intertitle 'Space sponsored by Repsol' introduces the sequence with migrants home-delivering gas bottles. Here, the Argentinian Leon Gieco's song provides the extra-diegetic music setting the critical tone of the scene as he sings 'the so-called illegal migrants with no documents are hopeless and breathless, 'if you ask me to go back where I was born, I ask you to take your companies out of my country and then we will be on the same level'. Torres asks the gas bottle worker how much

he earns and the man answers that he does not earn a salary, he only receives tips. This scene clearly exposes the exploitation that Repsol, the Spanish oil company established in Latin America, is exercising over undocumented migrants, who due to their 'illegal' status are forced to find jobs for no wages, only tips. Here Torres makes a strong political statement, stressed by the musical lyrics and powerfully introduced as a separate chapter through the use of intertitles.

Similarly, Torres' critical tone is expressed by means of Nana and Ben's speeches that are interwoven and keep reinforcing each other. Andrej's critical speech is also introduced in the shots with a more radical condemnation of the social and political injustices over poorer countries that serves as a final statement to what Ben and Nana are saying. The effect that Torres creates emphasises the documentary's strong rejection of Western practices against poorer countries, especially in Africa and Latin America. The montage stresses Torres' perspective in the following scene where her shadow riding the bike is shown with Leon Gieco's music, again with images of migrant men, women and children in order to help European audiences remember and learn about the past to better understand the present. The repeated images of Colombus' statue in Barcelona pointing to America are juxtaposed with images of Spanish companies' names which are also based in America, such as, again, Repsol, Telefónica, Gas Natural, Zara, El Corte Inglés, La Caixa, BBVA, Endesa and Caja Madrid. Torres repeatedly mixes a shot of one name of a company with a shot of Colombus, and with this montage and the music Torres connects Spain and America with a strong rejection of the way these Spanish companies are working in overseas countries. Furthermore, images of newspapers headlines and photos with 'migrants are victims of exploitation' come to reinforce the criticism and help the viewer to make connections with what has already been said by the Repsol delivery worker. These scenes urge the national audience to remember and understand the implications of the hybrid nature of their national identity. The intimacy in the relationship with Latin American migrants combined with the denial of the colonial past and present is deeply rooted in Spanish culture, but somehow negated by the individual and collective memory. Torres in this way condemns First World countries' practices of exploitation of developing countries.

Nevertheless, Torres gives Catalina, the Argentinian-Spanish-Catalan character in the film, more agency than the rest of the characters. Cata considers her nationality 'Migrant' although her passport is Spanish. She 'takes the role of interviewer herself and, with a microphone, interviews people in the streets in order to show the other side of the story' (Rodríguez, 2010: 54). Cata, in her personal introduction, openly criticised the USA, calling them on various occasions 'estados estúpidos' ('stupid states', my translation). Torres takes Cata as a mediating bridge probably because informants may take her as 'one of them' since she addresses the locals in Catalan. Thus, it could be argued that Torres prompts a particular kind of negative response towards immigration, since although 'the answers range from negative to those who emphasize the contribution of migrants to the well-being of the country and remind us of Spain's experience as a country of emigration, the voices that condemn and reject migrants are more audible' (Rodríguez, 2010: 55). Rodríguez implies that Torres includes more voices that are against migrants than those who are in favour. Torres thus seeks to emphasize that Catalans are full of prejudices and stereotypical conceptions towards migrants since she is making more audible the voices against migrants. In doing so, she strengthens the position of her documentary as a political instrument to fight racism and help audiences to align with the migrant characters in the film.

We hear the locals' mixed responses; about 13 women and 12 men tell Cata their opinion about migrants. About 39 shots of local men and 27 shots of the local women are intermixed at times with shots of graffiti images and with the face of Andrej as a significant gesture expressing a personal opinion about what is being said by these locals. In this way, the spectator observes the two different perspectives, the two symbolic worlds, only Torres is not just presenting the two worlds equally: with her montage, she introduces herself and gives her personal response to what she is presenting to us. This presentation of arguments from Spanish locals ends up with a short musical rap where the voices against immigration create the repetitive sounds and lyrics as a conclusion. With this technique, Torres criticises the way racist remarks become the repetitive and boring noise of stereotyped arguments and xenophobic thoughts. When the high speed music stops, the shot of Mary Carmen's smiling face replaces the previous fragmented shots and high speed music. She then tells us that she came with high hopes. This contrast places us in the middle of the two worlds that Torres is presenting to us; we have learnt about the perspective of the host community and, with that view as a background, we carry on learning about the journeys of the newcomers. The dramatic irony achieved through this montage stresses Torres' intention of compelling the viewers to become emotionally more attached to the migrant characters.

Torres exposes the ways the migrant characters and she herself are denied the rights that they are supposed and entitled to have. She draws attention to their political exclusion and empowers them by creating a film that reinforces the idea of the excluded, not only undocumented but also of the 'legal' migrants as part of the 'we', as a group who share common characteristics with regard to space, time, feelings of displacement, exclusion, hopes and fears. As Cata told us, her parents are from Catalonia but she is still a foreigner in Barcelona, therefore Torres insists on demonstrating how feelings of displacement may come anywhere to anyone.

As Rancière puts it 'emancipation is the possibility of a spectator's gaze other than the one that was programmed' (2007). When Torres invites us to consider ourselves as part of the 'we' she has created, she does so not without complications, and there is always a struggle in recognising the foreigner who lives within us, but only through that process can we understand our own estrangement and others' better. As Ahmed explains, 'the designation of an "I" or "we" requires an encounter with others (...) given that the subject comes into existence as an entity only through encounters with others, then the subject's existence cannot be separated from the others who are encountered' (2000: 7). Then we are closer to understanding how these encounters can also mean the establishment of ideological relationships that can bring people together independently from the fact that they may come from different countries, religions or ethnic origins. For instance, we see how Ben feels an alien in his homeland, surrounded by North Americans, because he does not agree with the USA's political views and culture. He demonstrates how one can become a foreigner in his/her own country just for not thinking in the same way or for disagreeing with the status quo of his/her country of origin.

In order to achieve this alignment with the 'we' in *Si nos dejan*, Torres plays with the spectator's gaze. The analysis of how the gaze works in the film can be informed by psychoanalytic theories. As Miller points out, psychoanalytic notions have proved to be remarkably providential for interrogating questions of postcoloniality (2010: 481-482). Miller states that 'the conventional documentary sets the spectator's gaze up as competent, once it is guided by the

knowing hand-eye-technology coordination of the director and editor' (2010: 481). Therefore, we could raise questions with regard to the extent to which Torres guides the spectators' gaze to align it with her own, questions about the way she looks with the eyes of 'the other' and enables the viewers to look with 'the other's gaze'.

bell hooks accounts for the oppositional gaze and states that the numerous attempts to repress black people's right to look has produced a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze. Torres presents shots of graffiti portraying black people with eyes staring and looking straight at the viewer. These images retaliate against our own perspective since we are placed straight in front of the other's gaze, in this case in the images on the walls. Torres uses extradiegetic music to add dynamism and strength to the shots of the public spaces of Barcelona, this time with Manu Chao's 'Rumba de Barcelona': this belongs to a musical genre called Catalan rumba, a fusion of flamenco and the music of Afro-Cuban slaves.

The fusion and the speed of the montage build in crescendo as the first shots of the bird's-eye view of the city move into the more specific images of people and places in the streets. There are close-ups with many different faces of migrants, the familiar characters of the documentary, new ones, police checking migrants, dogs, different rolling devices like trolleys, push chairs and bikes, graffiti with faces of different nationalities and phrases reading 'resistencia' and 'quema tu curriculum' ('resistance' and 'burn your CV', my translation). In between some of the shots, the shadow of Torres, riding the bike as well as filming herself in a mirror to portray herself filming the scene, indicates that this is an exploration of her personal identity, as she is describing herself by these phrases. In this way, she is not only including herself as the eye who is looking but also including us as part of those looking and being observed at the same time.

We are also offered extremely long queues of migrants waiting to apply for documents in the Immigration Office. While the song lyrics refer to all the different characters that can be seen in Las Ramblas, the popular area of Barcelona, Torres uses all the elements that she can see in the streets to work as instruments for opposition, and her documentary is in itself an act of resistance against the system that controls and neglects migrants. As Rancière states, 'one condition typically thought necessary for the politicization of art is the becoming-active of the spectator' (2007). Torres emancipates the spectator when she forces him/her to select and make sense of the images. She presents myriad shots of everyday life details, of the urban and human landscape, many of them surprising, like the various shots of mail boxes, maybe for their resemblance to mouths which can receive, process and also give, or perhaps they could even deploy a metaphor for our human brains, receiving, processing and giving information. Torres then urges us to select the fast moving images, re-appropriate them and make them our own.

The increasingly fast rhythm in the shots accelerates together with the fast speed music until it leads to Nana going to his room. When the music stops in the next shot, we see Nana putting a fresh T-shirt on while looking at the camera, naked from the waist up with an open smile. Next, the music starts again, which this time is slow and relaxing and diegetic. We are now in Torras i Bages' shelter, the fast rhythm and the intensity of the music and fast shots juxtaposed with images of the city under a hot sun is transformed now into the peaceful and inviting improvised home of the migrants. Torres creates dissensus by showing the otherwise wasted land of Torras i Bages as a site of peace and relaxation and the body of the African migrant as the site of calm

and comfort. We see curtains moving with the breeze, and welcoming faces smiling at Torres, who walks at ease around the shelter, as opposed to the intensity and the chaos of the previous shots of the centre of Barcelona. Torres constructs for the viewer a bodily perception of coolness, a calm and inviting space thanks to the body of Nana, who invites the viewer after a hot day under the sun in the hostile and polluted city. Nana becomes more familiar for the viewer in this way and his living space is also portrayed as a non-threatening space where we can all feel at ease.

The montage transforms the streets of Barcelona into the enclosed, claustrophobic space, repressed and controlled by police surveillance, whereas it portrays the space of Torras i Bages as the calm space that these men have created for themselves and where the viewer finally finds peace. Torres greets the other men in the shelter, who all seem happy to see her, and she appears to feel at ease filming them and sharing what looks like a delicious and colourful rich African stew. Torres mixes these shots in the shelter with shots of Andrej and Cata cooking and tasting Ukrainian food. All the characters, including Torres herself, enjoy the food, the music is relaxing and joyful and they all seem at ease. There are some close-ups of the foreign food but Torres focuses on the characters tasting and enjoying it. Food, then, is a vehicle for Torres to deepen immersion in these migrants' cultures and experiences; as Marks points out, for people whose histories are represented in few ways, it is the valuable 'memories of tastes, smells, and caresses that must be coaxed into audiovisual form' (2000: 243). Being able to be inside the shelter with these men gives us the opportunity to share the space, to learn more about the life inside their improvised home and to understand better their reality. The power of this comparison between the outside world (the world of the urban space) and the world of the space in Torras i Bages becomes a comparison between the shrunken and closed (even though it is outside) space where consensus dwells and the open (although it is inside), fresh and clean space where dissensus reigns. Torres, then, in a subaltern position, looks and helps others in the same unprivileged position of looking as well. As bell hooks argues, 'even in the worst circumstances of domination, the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures of domination that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency' (2010: 510). Again, this takes us to Rancière's term 'dissensus', since this agency brings about challenges in the relations of power and endows the resistance that makes possible for everybody to speak and be seen and heard.

As the migrants are the ones being observed and followed by the police, Torres is also observing and making us observe with her and the rest of characters what it means to be on the other side; this is how the viewer can see from the perspective of the migrant, being reminded that Torres is the one behind the camera. Her position is clear and evident since the beginning and throughout the film, thanks to the continuous multi-lens shots of her bike. On the other hand, we see multiple shadows of wheels rolling against the surface, creating an optical illusion of various bikes instead of only the one that Torres rides. These other illusionary wheels could belong to the bikes we as active participants are riding together with her. The energy that the fast-rolling wheels convey allows us to participate in this journey of discovery in which we are permanently made aware of Torres's viewpoint and of the degree of distortion that the image represents as part of her own psychological struggle, therefore making the spectators active participants instead of being passive viewers. The connection is powerfully established also in order to keep our gaze aligned with hers whilst constructing a plural, mobile spectator. Torres plays in this way with the transformative potential of movement itself, the dialectics of motion and the stasis of the

spectatorial experience, since she mobilises the spectator's gaze with her use of kinetics throughout the film. From the start, Torres places the viewer with her on her bike with numerous images of the speeding bike's shadows conveying a movement that is translated into the viewer's perception of instability, particularly when Torres falls from her bike, installing in the viewer from the very start the physical sense of her own feelings and lack of safety due to her lack of the documents necessary to permit her to stay in the country.

The final performance in *Si nos dejan* also serves to make the viewer recognise the irony and ambiguity between the lyrics of the song and the reality of the lives of many migrants in Barcelona. The final scenes show the Cuban band Arturo y la Máquina del Sabor dancing and singing 'Come to Barcelona'. The song describes all the beautiful places that one can visit in the city, and is sung in a barber shop and in a domino room while Torres shows images of newspapers with photos and headlines of the numbers of migrants found dead on the shores, more numbers who are protesting or politicians' declarations about immigration policies, etc. Torres intends to show how conflictive the various perspectives regarding the subject of immigration in Barcelona are. From Torres's hand-held camera, the city of Barcelona is resignified from the migrant perspective, and the bike functions as a metaphor, on one hand of the continuous displacement of the camera through all spaces in the city and, on the other, of the continuous displacement of the characters who have been travelling, including the filmmaker herself as creator and as subject of the documentary.

The urban space is experienced through 'an aesthetic of movement where instability becomes paradoxically the principle of structure' (Bredella and Lathusen, 2008: 41). Although for Rodríguez (2010: 54) 'movement is alternated with more static scenes, usually devoted to the individual interviews', we can observe how even in the individual interviews the camera is continuously moving, more in some than in others, but there is always some kind of movement. The effect this produces is to increase the sense of the movement in which the characters are forced to live; therefore forcing the viewer to move with them, so not only the characters but also Torres' point of view can be more effectively comprehended. Similarly, through the use of so many fast shots woven together, with sentences coming from the characters, which are joined together through the editing process for the viewer to understand it as common speech. Thus, Torres wants the spectator to become part of the same effort that the characters are sharing, that is to fight for people's rights, the political struggle, to travel, to move, and to understand the feelings implied in the migratory experience: she forces us to work the meaning out and make connections.

According to Bruno, when viewing films we can be apparently static, but there is still a 'mobile dynamics in the act of viewing a film'. She adds: 'the spectator moves across an imaginary path, traversing multiple sites and times' (2007: 56). Torres offers a space that is travelled by the camera. As Bruno points out, 'travel culture is written on the techniques of filmic observation' (Ibid). The urban voyage that Bruno refers to becomes the way Torres imagines urban space, 'the moves between and across cultures, as well as through time' (2007: 160). The way Torres chooses to create this relationship between characters and viewers is through an essayistic film where Torres offers a personal exploration that creates a greater connection between film director and spectators.

With her bike, Torres intends to discover things together with the viewers: we are travelling with her and participating emotionally in all her discovering, we learn about characters' despair, fears and expectations for the future. This structure encourages the spectator to identify with the characters, since Torres addresses the spectator directly: for example, in the scene when the owner of the bar is asking Torres for her papers, otherwise she will not be taken for the job, the man talks directly to the lens of the camera, addressing the viewers, who thus identify with Torres' position in the scene. In fact, Rascaroli claims that:

> The author's personal reflection asks to be either shared or rejected by the viewer. Humanism is indeed implicit in the essay structure, the assumption of a certain unity of the human experience, which allows two subjects to meet and communicate on the basis of this shared experience. The two subject positions, the 'I' and the 'you', determine and shape one another (2008: 36-37).

In *Si nos dejan* the author presents her theme reflecting subjectively on her position and that of her fellow migrants characters at the same time that renders an objective account of factual events. She uses her digital camera and rides undercover through the city making a kind of investigative journalism which is rooted in fact and is at times very revealing in its exposure of the inhuman conditions that undocumented migrants are forced to endure in Spain. Additionally, she presents the problematic issues of the bureaucratic system of the Immigration Laws and the State General Secretary Office for Immigration, as well as how the system is failing. Torres visits Norma Falconi, the spokesperson from the association 'Documentos para todos' ('Documents for All', my translation), who tells Torres about the complications involved in the regulatory process and how she will have to work without a working permit for at least three years until she can manage to get the documents.

Torres leaves and while riding around the city, the image takes us to the streets of Barcelona with the voiceover of Falconi, explaining how the Spanish government is purposefully keeping the numbers of undocumented migrants high since it gives a boost to the black market economy, enabling companies to evade paying social security. Torres intends the viewer to learn more of the complex processes and what migrants have to go through in Barcelona and Spain by making us witnesses of her conversation with Falconi. The images of the urban space that is travelled back and forth construct an affective relationship between the rider (Torres) and her spectators. Torres rides away from the immigration office and places the camera on her back so the space is again travelled with a sense of wasted time and effort. This is how Torres expresses and makes us participants in the continual physical and psychological struggle implied in her efforts to obtain legal status in Spain. The space that is crossed will have to be crossed again in the future, as the Falconi's voiceover reminds Torres and us that in three years time she will probably have to go back to the office to apply for the required documents.

7.4 Conclusion

In summary, we can observe that Torres' use of this essay film structure together with a fragmented and rapid montage as well as dynamic sound (noise and music), seeks to interpellate the audience and to connect with the individual spectator. In addition, Torres creates a sense of tension through continuous movement, where everybody and everything is subjected to the fast rhythm of images and events, thus composing a vision of the city where the viewer is taken for a ride to witness and feel the movement and tension of the filmmakers' life as an undocumented migrant. Torres shows how the migrants appropriate space by moving through it and making sense of it in their own terms. This is how the characters make use of 'tactics' against the imposition of government 'strategies' and this is also how Torres creates dissensus against consensus.

Si nos dejan challenges national audiences to look from the other's side, to follow Torres on her bike to find the conflict, the difficulty, the hostility and the controversy of life for migrants in Barcelona. Torres provides the public with a stage to watch and hear the performance of the otherwise 'unseen' and 'unheard' of the society. She is, therefore, fighting with her instruments, bike and camera, with an aesthetic of movement and politics, for the recognition of those who have not been able to make themselves visible or have a voice within society.

Torres offers a view of Barcelona from the point of view of 'the other': how the camera looks at the city and its components with the eyes of the migrant. With her bike and her hand-held camera continually moving, Torres intensifies the movement, the multicultural noise and the polysemy of voices. Thus the film suggests a strong vision of the world she is trying to convey to the spectator as she engages us in a continuous dialogue that mixes up faces, accents, looks, laughter, sadness, in sum, stressing difference while making the spectator establish connections and play an active part in the meaning the film is trying to transmit.

Torres pursues the viewer's identification with her own point of view, she explicitly reports and mediates and does not let the viewer forget that it is her vision of Barcelona we are looking at. This honesty creates a dialogue where spectators are made aware of their position as active watchers. The cinematic techniques employed reinforce racial and cultural mixing as something positive and enriching with the protagonists' speeches intermingling in rapid, fragmented scenes. The relationship created between the filmmaker, characters and viewers is one of a constructed solidarity where we are all included as riding along as part of the same quest, thus producing a dialogue that invites a revision of postcolonial memory, racism and globalisation.

8. Madrid from the Other Side in *El otro lado…un acercamiento a Lavapiés* (Basel Ramsis, 2002)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the documentary *The Other Side… an Approach to Lavapiés*, made by Egyptian Basel Ramsis in 2002. The film presents a variety of voices from locals and from the biggest groups of migrants who are settled in Lavapiés, a multicultural neighbourhood in central Madrid. These migrant men and women come from China, Latin America, Bangladesh and North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Following Naficy's theories, I will demonstrate how, through the use of the aesthetics and narrative characteristics of accented filmmaking, Ramsis constructs a documentary that works as a scene of dissensus, offering a depiction of Lavapiés as a transitional space where race and ethnic origin are more fluid and human relationships appear as more conflictive, thereby modifying the perceptual coordinates of the Spanish community, giving voice to myriad voices and challenging the status quo of the city.

Naficy affirms that 'self-inscription tends to implicate the author as the actor, thus collectivizing the film's enunciation' (1999: 137). Ramsis makes himself and his team part of the visual fabric of the documentary. He pursues a representation of a whole community formed by the migrants as being all together part of the sociocultural processes taking place in Lavapiés. As Ramsis is not only the director but also a character, interviewer and producer, he is performing multiple functions in his film, because by doing so 'a filmmaker cannot only save money but also shape the films's vision and aesthetics and become truly its author' (Naficy, 1999: 138). This is also the case in *Si nos dejan* (Torres, 2004), where the filmmaker is also the interviewer, producer, and editor as well as a character. However, while Ramsis shows members of his filming crew, Torres appears to be the sole crew member, with a hand-held camera, as opposed to the much more sophisticated filming equipment that Ramsis is seen to use.

This film challenges Spanish national and postcolonial identities by making national audiences look with the eyes of 'the other'. This contributes to the creation of a change in the perception of the quarter, which by extension is also a transformation of the perception of Madrid as a city and of Spain as a nation. Lavapiés is in this way rendered from the 'other side', the side of the migrants. Although Spanish locals play an important role in documenting what is happening in the quarter, Ramsis mainly situates himself in the point of view of the migrants, while the locals' arguments and opinions serve to strengthen the contesting tone of the film and the depiction of the quarter with all its socio-economic, cultural and political issues and struggles.

Dissensus in this film arises in the way Ramsis promotes a modification in the field of perception, a disruption and a change in the distribution of the sensible. Lavapiés can now be seen and understood from the side of those who have not had a part in the perceptual coordinates of the community. Now their voices are heard, their fears communicated and their stories told.

Ramsis' documentary manifests scenes of dissensus empowered and enhanced by the accented style that highlights the characters' continuous state of flux. By means of accented cinema strategies, Ramsis offers a portrayal of multiple and conflictive perspectives, borderless and transitional characters and spaces which reinforce both migrants and locals' fluidity and liminality in a historically changing and multicultural quarter of Madrid. The film leaves both migrant and local viewers with an incomplete closure, inviting them to reflect on their own liminal and transitional position in their own changing space. Almost like a musical, this documentary relies on music as much as on speech to create a powerful and emphatic atmosphere that increases the borderless, transitional and 'becoming' tone of the film.

I will show how Ramsis creates a vision of immigration in Madrid which is both conflictive and interstitial, exploring the tensions in human relationships, explicitly addressing both native and migrant audiences, making us participants and depicting a space that is both shared and contested at the same time. This vision challenges the national viewer to better understand his/her past, present and future position with regard to migrants, while helping the migrant viewer to understand the way other migrants find themselves struggling with the new space that is also at a moment of change. In other words, it invites on the one hand the migrant viewer to reflect on his/her own transitional stage in the host country, and, on the other hand, guiding the native viewer to understand his/her own transitional stage as a member of a community that is changing by looking at the migratory experience with the eyes of 'the other'.

8.2 An Accented Documentary

This may well be the first documentary about migrants in Spain filmed by a non-Spaniard. The director, Básel Ramsis, started and finished filming in the summer of 2001, just before the New York attacks, and worked on the post-production process after these events. He nevertheless makes clear by intertitles at the very start of the film that this event did not affect his documentary since he and his team carried on working as if nothing had happened. He also clarifies in the intertitles that neither he nor any member of his filming crew had read the book *Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel P. Huntington, who proposes the theory that people's cultural and religious identities will be the main reason of conflict in the post-Cold War world.

Ramsis intends to make clear that the post-production process was not affected in any way by the terrorist attacks or, presumably, by Huntington's theory, so that the viewer can receive the documentary as it was intended before the September 11 attacks to make it coherent and properly understood, since, had the events been known by the participants, the result of the documentary would have been quite different. However, as Ramsis decides to make it part of the film by adding the information at the beginning, viewers are then affected by it, since they will be receiving and understanding the film within the context that Ramsis sets from the start. Part of the effect of this information at the beginning gives the film a gloomy sense about the unavoidable lack of understanding between humans from different cultures and the dangers that this entails. The future clash or the battle of cultural forces to which one of the characters refers later in the film creates a dramatic irony, since the viewer already knows that this terrible clash has already taken place, and therefore the film works as a premonition of what was about to happen, because it had actually happened by the time the film is viewed.

Furthermore, the premonitory quality of the film is also reinforced with a didactic and a certain moralising tone, not only by means of its content but also by its formal structure. Ramsis recreates part of his own cultural traditions by following a formal narrative structure based on the great Arab and African storytelling tradition. He divides the film into 8 tales ('cuentos') through intertitles. The last one is 'tale 8 again and many more' implying the never-ending nature of the story and comparing it to the eternal story of lack of understanding among human beings.

The structure is plural and non-linear, with many different narrations taking place at the same time. The first tale, the tale of Uba Opa, is narrated by an African artisan who engages the filming crew by asking them 'Do you know the story of Uba Opa? Do you want to hear a story? - Yes? - All right then, now that we are among friends, let us tell a tale', (my translation). This type of call and response interaction at the beginning of a story is traditional of African storytelling and it is a way of engaging and connecting with the audience. Ramsis then uses this interaction in his documentary through its formal structure, using storytelling narration techniques plus music and dance to keep the audience engaged entertained so the information and ideas he is trying to transmit can be more easily retained by the viewer.

The last tale ends with a conclusive long black fade out while we can hear many of the voices heard during the film mixed together. This filters the cultural noise recalling all the voices who have taken part in the documentary, leaving their essence, which Ramsis ultimately proclaims as the need to listen to all the voices from the past, present and the future. The effect of this long filmic transition at the end also strengthens the transitional mode of the documentary and the characters. They are in the middle of a process, of a 'becoming', with an uncertain future, like a never-ending story. According to Naficy, 'in the best of accented films, identity is not a fixed essence but a process of becoming, even a performance of identity' (2001: 6). He adds that these identities are highly fluid and diasporic, 'raising important questions about political agency and about the ethics of identity politics' (Ibid).

This fluidity is clearly perceived in the film where contestation, struggle and uncertainty are overarched by a polysemy of voices which all seem disorientated without a clear view of what the future holds. The film clearly blames the local and national government and the local authorities for the insecurities and difficulties of the inhabitants of the quarter and offers this critique through the characters' direct speech, which can be either through the individual interviews or through even more politically critical use of musical performances. This democratic exposition of all the different points of view, within the same common thread that is the space they share and the lack of support from the state, allows Ramsis to create dissensus as migrants gain agency by showing us through a polysemy of voices what it is to be on the other side of Lavapiés.

Similarly, the dissensus that the film comes to stage is reinforced thanks not only to the liminality of both documentary form and its director, but also to the way Ramsis places himself at the interstice, both physically in the documentary and also ideologically as far as filmic practices are concerned, since his ideological position with regard to the migrants is clear from the beginning. As Naficy states 'Accented cinema concerns deterritorialization and is itself produced in the interstices of cultures and cinematic production practices' (2001: 8). Following

Naficy's description, *El otro lado* can be understood as a self-reflexive and accented documentary where the filmmaker includes himself and his filming crew as part of the quest to express the 'becoming' tone of the quarter and also of all the inhabitants in it. For this purpose, there are various shots of Ramsis and the filming crew while preparing the interviews in the Suristan Bar, setting up the lights or through showing images of photos taken when the crew was filming the Latin American group busking in the streets of Lavapiés. Moreover, at the start we see how Ramsis purposefully keeps the viewer confused with regard to the type of film thisis going to be as we see how the African migrants pose the question of what type of film this is. The fact that there is no answer to this initial question also serves to place the viewer in the same uncertainty these migrants are feeling with regard to their position in the film.

Naficy refers to accented filmmakers as having some similarities among themselves which stem mainly from 'liminal subjectivity and interstitial location in society and film industry' (2001: 10). Ramsis shares some of the characteristics of accented filmmakers. For example, he makes clear from the start that he is working independently and funding this documentary from his own team's resources. In this way, he becomes a subaltern, a kind of outlaw who is working outside mainstream cinema. We see shots of a member of the crew carrying a box asking for money to fund the documentary project in the streets. Part of this interstitial location comes from Ramsis's origins. Egypt is a North African country, but it still has strong historical differences with the rest of North Africa, and particularly in its relation with Spain. His position is, as Naficy argues, that of an accented filmmaker, who is a 'shifter' in the sense that they are liminal subjects and interstitial artists 'with multiple perspectives and conflicted or performed identities' (2001: 32).

This 'shifting' that Naficy refers to may be applied to a certain extent to Ramsis' approach to the documentary. He is behind the camera and then suddenly he is portrayed with the characters as becoming one of them, either locals or migrants. He very intentionally reflects the difficulty others have in determining his identity, as both locals and migrants fail to define his ethnic origin, thus reinforcing the idea of how complex and wrong is to label human beings by their looks. Furthermore, Ramsis' position in the film is to a certain extent ambiguous. Although he sometimes takes part in the activities he is documenting, at other times he keeps himself at a distance. For instance, he never speaks and shows himself speaking to the audience: when he is heard, he is not seen, and vice versa. In this way he remains slightly detached and at the interstice of the events. He seeks to focus on the viewers' identification with the content of the documentary as much as to focus on the representation of its subjects. He intends to establish the limit of his own identity and territory as not conforming to any of the other characters, either Spanish or migrants. He is not a migrant who has arrived by boat, risking his own life like many other African migrants in Spain, but he is a North African filmmaker who has decided to film his documentary about migrants in Spain. He does not consider himself a migrant in the same sense as other North African migrants who have come to Spain illegally to start from scratch, but he is not a national either; his performance of in-between-ness is a reflection of how he sees himself at the interstice. Nevertheless, this is not the case in his documentary political position, which sits more comfortably within the boundaries of the other side, that of the migrants.

The liminality or transitional perspective is rendered on many occasions, as happens in the already mentioned first tale, 'The Tale of Uba Opa', narrated by the African artisan, telling the story of two men sitting on the seashore, a black one and a white one. The black man tells the

white one that he is really black and becomes the second narrator of the tale within the tale. The African artisan tells how the second narrator explains how the white man's ancestor was black and turned white by swimming from one side to the other of the sea. This tale communicates the notion that we are products of change and never what we think we are. The narrator of the tale also says that it is not a matter of black or white, but many different colors, which implies a more fluid conception of the nature of human beings. In this case, the sea is the element of transformation in the man who thinks he has lost his identity because his skin colour has faded from black into white. But the storyteller's intention is to instruct the listeners with the idea that nothing is fixed, that we are not always what we think, and that skin colour does not give humans their identity. Furthermore, he shows himself many times sitting next to musicians performing, some of them migrants singing about their migratory experiences and others Spaniards who sing political songs against the Spanish political system. In this way, he seeks to situate himself both with migrants and locals but only when locals are also contesting and criticising the system that works towards their exclusion.

This documentary acts as a political device intended to challenge authority and oppression and does so by means of presenting unequal power relations. As Naficy states 'Accented cinema is nonetheless a political cinema that stands opposed to authoritarianism and oppression' (2001: 30). Ramsis' documentary is ultimately political with many examples of characters expressing ideas that stand against authority and oppression. In this way, Ramsis includes a street puppet show where an Argentinian migrant shows Columbus struggling to get legal documents upon his arrival in America. This playfulness with Spanish history places the national viewer once more on the other's side, recalling the colonial past and contesting ruling assumptions. The representation and contestation of power relations is also expressed by the narration of different stories from the characters. For example, a female African migrant tells the story of her sister Celia, and how she was taken to prison in her attempt to leave her husband. She directly blames the Spanish judicial system, which purposely favours a German man against an African woman.

Ramsis uses fragmentation with both camera and montage to represent fluidity and to some extent chaos. One of the young African characters is filmed with extreme close-ups together with a fragmentation of his face while he is speaking. The extreme close-up shots on his face show that his face is a marker of difference. This stresses the troubled nature of the black African migrant, adding a chaotic and fractured representation of part of his body and bringing up questions on identity issues. This camerawork can also reflect an intention to demonstrate the fragmentation that this character is suffering living in Europe, his life, like his body, made up of pieces that he is trying to put together as he seeks a place where he can be happy. He says 'I like Lavapiés but I don't want to die in Lavapiés'. He does not express himself very clearly and the fragmented close-ups reinforce a difficulty in understanding him fully, which in turn reflects the complicated nature and the mixed feelings of displaced and migrant identities.

The filmmaker himself, as a man originally coming from Egypt, expresses the conflictive nature in the understanding of his identity by others. At one point in the film, one of the Spanish male characters asks him 'Are you Spanish?' (My translation) We don't hear Ramsis' voice, but we understand he has answered 'no' when the man does not continue with his condemnation of migrants in the quarter; instead his wife explains her viewpoints about Chinese migrants and how she thinks they all belong to mafias. At another point in the film, a black African migrant

tells Ramsis: 'Aesthetically, I see you as a black man', (my translation), implying how Ramsis can either be considered black or Spanish, depending on the person. This reinforces the idea of how people tend to organise others on their own terms. But it is also telling of how Ramsis expresses the difficulty in categorising human beings under parameters that do not help them in their struggles in the new country, when they tend to keep to themselves and become small ethnic groups disconnected from the other minorities, unable to join forces that could strengthen them as a group to gain political agency in the host country. This is perhaps the strongest line of argument of the film: the pessimism that permeates the film arises from the very notion that human beings tend to stick to their own ethnic groups and therefore, for minority and marginal groups, this refusal to come to terms with the idea that this is what makes them weaker is the basis of their political failure. Ramsis clearly criticizes the Spanish institutions that work towards exclusion and inequality, but he also exposes how migrants' lack of ability to come together in solidarity is undermining their political agency.

8.3 The Biblical Intertext

Ramsis appeals on repeated occasions to the collective experience, for instance when he recalls a Biblical passage. The viewer not only sees the filmmaker interviewing, watching and filming the characters but can also hear his voice as omniscient creator, with 'voice of God' recalling the Gospel of John, helping the viewer to establish a link between the name of Lavapiés, which means 'washfeet' and the scene in the Bible when Jesus asked his disciples to wash each other's feet. This creates a powerful moral statement that urges viewers to understand how important it is for human beings to help each other and serves as a context for the film to explore inequalities in our world.

For French psychoanalytic theorists Guy Rosalto and Didier Anziew, sound plays an essential role in the constitution of the subject (cited in Stam, 2000: 217), and Chion borrows from Pierre Schaeffer the term 'acousmatic' to refer to those sounds without a visible source (Ibid.) Stam refers to Chion who suggests that 'the acousmatic voice unsettles the spectator because of its capacity (1) to be everywhere (ubiquity), (2) to see everything (panopticism), (3) to know everything (omniscience), and (4) to do everything (omnipotence)' (Ibid). This non-diegetic speech or voiceover, which we can identify as Ramsis's voice, is juxtaposed with images of Da Vinci's Last Supper followed by images of Latin American children. The voice embodies the voice of Jesus in the Gospel of John telling his apostles to wash each other's feet as he himself has washed their feet. Following Chion, the acousmatic voice in this scene evokes the voice of the Divine entity, and it both unsettles and compels the spectator to imagine the filmmaker positioning himself on the same side as the omnipotent creator, thus giving us a moral lesson on how we should behave with each other, since 'the "voice-of-God" narration of the canonical documentary illustrates its capacity to know everything' (Stam, 2000: 218). Ramsis is taking on Jesus' role to provoke in Spanish audiences an arousal of religious dogma, as Spain is mainly a Catholic country with a vast tradition of this religion being at the centre of the country's life. He proclaims Spain's responsibility to care for and help those who need it more on Spaniards' own terms, so Ramsis' voice can be heard as speech and not as mere noise.

Ramsis takes advantage of the name of this area of Madrid and links it with the biblical scene. The voiceover in this scene, on the other hand, takes us to the biblical text of the Gospel of John with the washing of the feet, in Spanish 'lavapiés'. Both biblical intertexts, image and sound, are put together to create the effect of two levels: on the upper side of the frame we can see the photograph of the painting with the 12 apostles and Jesus in the middle, all sitting down at the Last Supper, while below we see the children also sitting in line, visually mirroring the alignment in the painting. The montage has been strategically coordinated to show images of the young children first, and through black transitions changing into images of the Da Vinci painting. Finally, and after a longer black transition, we can see both photos placed together with the words of Ramsis saying the last of the quoted lines from the Gospel of John: 'que os lavéis los piés los unos a los otros' ('ye also ought to wash one another's feet').

Ramsis presents the viewer with the idea that we must all help each other; especially those who are in more privileged positions in our society, who ought to serve and help those who have less, like the small children at the bottom of the frame. However, Ramsis is playing with the Bible, he is to a certain extent changing the Gospel, giving it new meaning by using his own voice and by the images that go with it. As Naficy states:

> Appealing to individual and collective experience is a postcolonial, Third Worldist, and exilic oppositional strategy to create locality, local knowledge, and located knowledge in the face of the tendency of hegemonic powers toward abstraction and universalization. These are some of the ways in which the subalterns speak (2001: 115).

Ramsis is appealing to the collective Christian knowledge and uses it to help national audiences recognize their responsibilities towards those who are less privileged in our society, but the way he chooses to do so seems to be to a certain extent with an authoritarian, paternalistic voice as he aims to create a cohesive force that unites everybody, marginal locals and migrants, so they can fight the system in a more effective way. The idea of putting together Jesus and his disciples with what seem deprived small children creates and reinforces the link between the Catholic Church and its involvement with the poor, as well as connecting them in a hierarchical system, with the powerful Church at the top and the defenseless children at the bottom.

8.4 Clash of Cultures and the Staging of Dissensus

This documentary illuminates the forms of exclusion that the state uses against the migrant by not granting him/her legal status or the space needed for coexistence. Ramsis has a desire to question and bring to the fore the conflicts taking place in Madrid, not only between locals and newcomers, but also between different groups of migrants as well. This happens when he interviews different characters who tell various versions of the conflicts that took place between Chinese and Arabs migrants in the quarter and that were the focus of attention in media reports in Spain. They explain how the media created a distorted view of the relationship between these two communities. In reality, the situation was that there were just a few isolated incidents where some glue-addict Arab boys, who are completely marginalised by society, robbed some Chinese shops. Some of the characters do not seem to agree on what happened or why, showing that the conflicts are complicated with many aspects to take into consideration, and that there is a need to

focus on the 'cause of the problem to understand the effect of it', as one of the African characters says. The Head of Studies of the Emilia Pardo Bazán School explains that the Mayor of Madrid at the time, José María Álvarez del Manzano, has done nothing to help the integration of these troubled boys in the city. He tells us that these are a few teenage boys who came alone with their own problems from Morocco and found themselves isolated, without resources and with no help from the authorities. In this way, Ramsis places well-informed Spanish characters throughout the film to offer a vision of the past and the present of Lavapiés. These characters are mainly male, a total of seven different men placed in the comfort of their offices, homes or bars. Their speeches then are understood and believed as facts since they act as historians or analysts of the situation of the quarter, and the mise-en-scène works towards their reliability, offering their speeches in their offices, talking to the camera with a substantial book collection behind them, or against the background of the school premises.

Ramsis also shows that there are conflicts between old and new neighbours of Lavapiés created by the arrival of the migrants, for example, the heated arguments spontaneously arising in the middle of the street, where some migrants and some Spaniards argue about the bad condition of the streets since migrants have come to the quarter. The argumentative tone rises into one of confrontation and shouting, the Spanish man leaves defeated after he shouts 'el problema es que tenemos una mierda encima que no la quita ni Dios' ('the problem is that we have got a filth here that not even God can take away from us', my translation). This 'filth' the Spanish man refers to can be understood as the way he sees the foreign as contaminating and destroying the purity of the space which was there before the migrants came, and it also exemplifies a racist dichotomy of purity/filth. Eventually, and after a heated confrontation, the man leaves in anger. In this scene, the camera has stayed at all times closer to the migrants: the Spanish men have come to explain their point of view but their arguments are inconsistent and weak compared to the ones offered by the migrant men and women. The two Spanish men leave defeated and the camera stays with the migrants: the space has become the territory of the migrants. This polemical scene recalls what Rancière calls the ground of political action: 'certain subjects that do not count create a common polemical scene where they put into contention the objective status of what is "given" and impose an examination and discussion of those things that were not "visible", that were not accounted for previously' (Panagia and Rancière, 2000: 125). The scene refers to the current exploitation that Spain is exerting over Latin America via multinationals like Telefónica. According to Rancière,

> the notion of dissensus thus means the following: politics is comprised of a surplus of subjects that introduce, within the saturated order of the police, a surplus of objects. These subjects do not have the consistency of coherent social groups united by common property or a common birth, etc. They exist entirely within the act, and their actions are the manifestation of a dissensus (Panagia and Rancière, 2000: 124-125).

El otro lado is an approach to what the quarter is at the moment of filming – a melting pot with various groups, very well defined and very well differentiated, old locals, new migrants and Spanish activists, all living together although in conflict, without coherence and organization but still potentially capable of becoming organized and introducing themselves within the perceptual coordinates of the community.

We see different communities of migrants separated with no strong cohesive links that unite them. This appears to be one of the problems of their struggles: they are missing a strong and well-organized group that could work effectively for their rights. This separation is obvious when Ramsis interviews one of the black activists. He says that his organisation only works to help African migrants who are black, but not North African because they do not feel related to their struggles. Ramsis then asks him what about South Americans and the activist says 'only if they are black' (my translation).

This film draws attention to how this lack of solidarity among different communities of migrants is detrimental to their future. These conflicting perspectives are shown throughout the documentary, for instance when the Chinese man disagrees with what other migrants have said about Chinese migrants or when some of the African men discuss different opinions about the same subject. However, all these different men and women, some migrants and some locals, demonstrate that although they do not belong to the same ethnic or religious group they are still linked by space and time and by the struggles migrants have to suffer in the new environment. The documentary is made of their differences and similarities working towards equality and fighting for their rights. Dissensus is enacted by means of the articulation of a plural speech, a plural migrant voice despite their own conceptions of the differences between them. But Ramsis also establishes the link between locals and migrants as being more similar that they think they are. There is also a request to learn about other cultures, as when one of the African men energetically states 'here when you see four black men speaking in the street you see 100 black men', adding that a solution would be for Spaniards to 'learn about Africa', not just via nature documentaries. As Stam and Spence argue, Hollywood films present Africa like a land of 'lions in the jungle' (1983: 6), so what this African man proposes is that media and television go deeper into the portrayal of African communities; for him this would help the way Spain sees Africa. In his own words, 'it should go deeper into the customs, traditions, and daily life routines of that community, to learn about African culture, to know, learn and understand it' (my translation).

This is a request to change damaging habits inbuilt in Western culture where there has been no intention to really learn in detail about African culture and its people. As Stam and Spence argue, sometimes the 'flaw in the mimesis derives not from the presence of distorting stereotypes but from the absence of representations of an oppressed group' (1983: 7). The voice of this African migrant strongly proposes the creation of new ways to look at and see African people. He is advocating for dissensus, for the creation of a new way of perceiving that could help him to be accepted and respected as an equal.

Ramsis finds in Lavapiés the ideal setting to stress the psychological and physical mobility and fluidity of the characters and space. He draws attention to the historically transitory nature of the quarter, which is also the nature of the whole country itself due to its geographical location between Africa and Europe, a location that has influenced the way Spaniards have tried to identify themselves with regard to their relationship with North Africa on the one hand, and with the rest of Europe on the other. The progressive links with Europe and becoming a member of the EU, with the subsequent assumed role of 'guardians' of the European frontiers with regard to

migrants from Africa, have increased the desire and the need to stress the distance with Africa in order to become closer to Europe and what this represents.

But what this film demonstrates is that Spain (through the representation of Lavapiés) has always been a transitional place occupied by 'others' and reinforces its changeable, fluid nature by continually referring to its historical past. This is a crucial aspect of this documentary, since Ramsis stresses how Lavapiés was the Jewish quarter of Madrid till Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. This connection, and how it is brought to bear upon the narrative, clearly challenges Spanish national amnesia with regard to its multicultural, historical past and reflects issues related to the always-problematic idea of Spanish national identity. This debate originated with Americo Castro and his 1948 essay *España en su historia*. Castro argued that 'the Spanish national identity were the product of the seven centuries of conflict and coexistence (convivencia) among the three "castes" of medieval Spain – Christians, Muslims, and Jews' (Boyd, 1997: 284). Castro argued that 'the subsequent repudiation of this pluralistic national identity by the dominant Christian caste–a tendency he labeled *vivir desviviéndose*, or a state of denial – had condemned Spain to permanent spiritual crisis and historical inadaptation' (Boyd, 1997: 284-285). More recently Ballesteros also points out (2001: 206) that the construction of the Spanish modern state is defined by getting rid of all those foreign elements that pose a threat to the idea of Spain as an imperial-Catholic nation before the later national-Catholic discourse with Franco. Then not only the metropolis but also the colonies urged for the expulsion/destruction of these elements embodied by Jews, Arabs and indigenous tribes.

This is exemplified at the beginning of 'Tale Two', when the Spanish female voiceover narrator tells a bedtime story to an imaginary child implicitly invoked as the viewer. The voice is heard with images of a Muslim woman carrying a heavy trolley up the stairs of the underground exit in the Lavapiés Square. She stops to catch her breath since she is struggling with the heavy lifting, then we see how a Spanish woman who was going downstairs stops and helps her take the trolley up the stairs. The story narrates how years ago the present church of San Lorenzo was originally the first synagogue of Madrid and that there was a fountain in which people used to wash their feet. The voice says 'ahora ya lo sabes, ya puedes dormir' (now you know it, you can go to sleep', my translation). The voice recalls the Jewish past of the quarter, how it was filled with many different people with different religions and traditions, and sets it up against the images of present day Madrid, offering a variety of faces, locals and migrants, as was probably the case in the past. The scene connects past and present and informs us through storytelling of the always existent fluidity of human relations, in particular those of Lavapiés, Madrid, and by extension, of Spain itself.

Following this scene, and to go deeper into the origins of the neighbourhood, an old Spanish man tells Ramsis one of the theories of the origins of the name of the quarter, and another Spanish man refers to the historical transitional space of Lavapiés once the Arabs and Jews were removed, explaining how internal migration started and how for many centuries the quarter became the transit zone for many travellers, visitors and internal and external migrants. This man also explains how the synagogue was demolished in 1931 and how a Catholic church, 'Iglesia de San Lorenzo', finally replaced it. The scenes invoke the cultural memory beyond our living generations, finding the roots of Lavapiés to understand what has changed so far and the possible changes that will occur in the future. Ramsis rescues from the past of Lavapiés the origins of the

name, the religious past in order to trace paths of transformation, of transition and change. As these narrations come directly from old, educated and respectable male Spaniards living in Lavapiés. Their interventions are understood as fact, and the message can be more believable to a Spanish audience. The viewer can then locate Lavapiés as it was, the Jewish quarter of Madrid, as this is conveyed by what seems to be a believable and reliable Spanish voice.

In order to understand the migrants in present day life in Lavapiés, Ramsis explores their routines and their feelings. They explain how they have found here the space to build their lives according to their home traditions, but they also explain how their newly constructed space is being threatened by exclusion policies from local and central authorities who are planning the construction of new, more expensive buildings to fill the quarter with more middle-class subjects which, in turn, will deliberately promote the disappearance of the poorer subjects of Lavapiés.

Ramsis creates a space where locals and migrants agree and disagree but he ultimately reflects the racism and ignorance of the locals due to a lack of education, as well as the inability of the Spanish authorities to secure the space and the resources for integration and coexistence. In addition, it becomes an explicit critique of the way Spanish politics is working on the one hand towards the exclusion of migrant communities, especially Moroccans, and, on the other, to promote the settlement of others more similar to Spanish culture and history, such as the Latin American community. This is stated by the Principal of the Lavapiés School who explains that 70% of the pupils are migrants, 62% being Ecuadorian, whereas a few years ago the majority were of Moroccan origin The changes that the authorities are planning or already imposing on the quarter are also revealed by these figures, which prove how the number of Arab pupils has decreased, as opposed to the rising numbers of Hispanic pupils. He says that the politics in Spain has been devoted to integrating Hispanic migrants while getting rid of the Moroccan migrants through marginalising practices.

Ramsis contributes to some extent to what Homi Bhabha requests in his preface to Naficy's *Home, Exile, Homeland*:

> What we can do, with all the modes of signification that lie to hand, is to wage our wars of 'recognition' for life worlds that are threatened with extinction or eviction; and shape our worlds and images to frame those representations of home and exile through which we take possession of a world whose horizon is marked, all at once, by the spirit of arrival and the spectre of departure (1999: xii).

El otro lado contributes to this idea of the fluidity and uncertainty of the migrant's world by means of the exposition that Ramsis makes of the arrival and settlement of the newcomers to Spain and the conflictive character of the co-existence between different cultures, marked also by the uncertainty of the future, since various characters express their doubts about where they will be going next when the government takes their homes down. This is how Ramsis explores the 'spectre of departure', by showing us how the characters speak about their unsettled and problematical lives. One example of this is when the African artisan says 'they are going to get us out', referring to the authorities; Ramsis asks him ' When?' and he answers, ' We don't know, we live with uncertainty' (my translation).

‘Tale Four’ focuses on characters expressing the role of the Madrid Council and its work towards the disintegration of the undesired communities of migrants. Also, not only migrants but also some locals speak about the programme created with strong European economic subsidies to change Lavapiés. A Spanish man working in the Sala Triángulo, a venue for theatrical representations of migratory stories, explains how the authorities are withdrawing economic subventions due to the political tone of the artistic performances that they are representing in the theatre. This works as an example of how the conservative government at the time used its power to modify artistic works that did not suit their political interests, thereby exposing how authorities can exert a degree of control and censorship in the arts, something that used to be the case in Franco’s dictatorship in an explicit manner, but now seems to be through a more implicit, strategic way by means of withdrawal of subventions. More explicitly, the African artisan affirms that their future is uncertain because they know the government is planning to get rid of the undesired migrants ‘con un potentcial económico enorme’ (‘with a huge economic power’, my translation). This scene is followed by the Spanish local man who is sitting in the bar having a beer, saying that he feels nostalgic for the quarter as it was before, ‘not because of the migrants but because before the quarter was nicer’ (my translation).

Performances like the one by the group singing ‘Soy ibero’ (‘I am Iberian’), functions as a satire of the Iberian ‘macho’ discourse, of the type of man who takes pride in thinking of himself as the powerful owner of the colonised territories. The song is a modern adaptation of the original ‘Soy minero’ (‘I am a miner’) and a classic song that recalled the pride of mineworkers in Franco’s Spain. This playful performance dislocates and deconstructs the national, historical, colonial greatness from its static traditional context and places it at the centre of irreverence and even shame, linking that colonial past to the present state of national affairs, and by making fun of it, disintegrating any pride that comes from that past or that national colonial identification. The sarcasm and irony in the lyrics help the spectator to decode and deconstruct traditional assumptions of Spanish colonial greatness and superiority.

The quarter is composed of many different groups: the traditional Spanish locals who are mostly old, the migrants from different countries and Spanish activists or squatters groups. There is also a Feminist Association and various Lesbian and Gay Liberation groups. Lavapiés has been for years and continues to be a kind of ‘laboratory’, which is also the name of one of the squatter groups whose members explain to the camera how the level of contestation of the quarter is becoming prominent in their search for social justice. They tell Ramsis about the way they are living their lives moving from one building to another as part of a social movement that searches for equality of rights. The space is then contested, the capitalist interests of the authorities clash with the poorer sectors of society who, in turn, try to design ways to rebel and oppose the ruling system by occupying and reoccupying the space.

The Spanish Women’s Association refers to how they became part of the protest to help the migrants after the events of El Ejido, the town in the south east of Spain where, on 6th February 2000, a Maghrebian migrant with mental disorders stabbed to death a local woman in the street market. As a result of this, most locals of the town took to the streets to protest against the killing and set fire to various Maghrebian establishments and houses with migrants inside. These violent episodes led to peaceful demonstrations by the migrants and the Spanish women’s association of

El Ejido, who complained about the way the authorities were failing to protect the migrants. In this way, Ramsis shows how some Spanish groups joined forces with migrants to protest against the racist outbursts that the Maghrebian people were suffering in this town in Spain, thereby establishing a link between associations of squatters, and the women based in Lavapiés and the events of El Ejido to show us the important level of social activism that exists in this quarter and how much can be achieved through combined efforts from different organisations and communities.

This buzzing activism in Lavapiés is confronted by the authorities, who through exclusionary strategies, intend to displace the less desirable subjects of the quarter. A young Spanish man explains how they are also feeling excluded by the state, which is giving licences to middle-class bar owners to facilitate middle-class customers visiting the quarter and in this way create an invasion that will displace more unconventional customers such as themselves. This, in his own words, has already been successfully used by the authorities in the quarter of 'El Albaicín' in Granada. This use of policies that directly aim to control the space and who occupies it goes against people's liberties and freedom. These are the two worlds in one that Rancière refers to, where not only migrants are excluded, but also locals who do not belong to the desirable homogeneous middle class that the state supports and encourages to occupy the spaces of Spanish cities. The world of the subversive and the world of the policymakers clash in the world of the documentary and become one where the clash is exposed, criticised and revealed as fact.

Another scene that exemplifies the breaking or disorganization of the ways of seeing the Spanish city takes place in two sequences when the camera tracks directly behind a couple of locals, man and woman, who are both filmed in full shot while walking on the streets. While the camera follows them, they acknowledge being followed and, although carrying on walking, they feel unsettled and keep on looking back, disconcerted at being followed. The effect is also disconcerting for the national viewer, who must identify with the other's gaze. This camera chase shows how Spaniards are purposefully placed on the other's side, being followed and observed as migrants usually at unease feel in the host country. This scene provokes an aura of anxiety and puts the Spanish viewer since this chase reflects a kind of threatening dimension for the nationals.

Ramsis tries to change roles by placing national audiences in a transformation process, forced to assume a liminal position, which causes them to adapt into a transitional status as well. *El otro lado*'s most significant accomplishment is to make not only migrants, but also native viewers wonder about their own transitional state, in a changing and more globalized society. As Watson states, 'multiculturalism in terms of diversity and difference appears, then, to be under threat from global convergence' (2000: 68), and Ramsis exposes this threat as stemming not only from consensual structures of exclusionist local and state powers, but also from cultural clashes and lack of understanding among the different cultures that are now in Lavapiés.

The Peruvian builder refers to the hard work that Peruvians, Colombians, Bolivians and Ecuadorians do in Lavapiés. He says 'we have demonstrated that we are not criminals but hard workers, go and look in the streets, all the men who are paving the streets in Lavapiés are Chilean, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, Romanian, Russian, badly paid but working' (my translation). The man is speaking for the rest of the migrants who find themselves treated like criminals, with

stereotypical generalizations that take Colombians as drug dealers, and Cuban and Puerto Rican women as prostitutes. This Peruvian builder asserts that media representations reinforce these stereotypes. He is defending himself and all those who work very hard with fewer rights and for fewer wages. Ramsis interviews him in a building site, sitting down next to a wheelbarrow, which takes up as much of the frame as the man himself. This scene is a construction of dissensus, as this man is rightly arguing against the bad pay conditions into which migrant workers are forced. The man is dignified by the mise-en-scène, with his working clothes, surrounded by his work equipment, in a building site where he and others are working for less money than local builders.

Jorge, another character who comes from Colombia and works for the ACULCO association, explains that they are fighting to achieve agreements. He also expresses his disappointment when he arrived in Spain. He explains that in Colombia, Spain is considered the 'mother land', referring to the colonial past and the historical link between the two countries. However, as he also explains, those prospects have been shattered since he found this mother Spain not to be as 'motherly' as he expected. Again, the effect created by the following shot of the performers singing 'Soy ibero' serves as a review of Spanish society not welcoming and not offering help to Latin American migrants who have come with the presumption of finding a welcoming country where they would feel accepted and respected.

A Maghrebian man says that there is a past Lavapiés, but the Lavapiés of the future starts now. The African artisan also states that he does not care for the future of Lavapiés but is interested in today, in now. It seems a fact for all of them that changes will happen soon. Therefore the documentary is depicting a place that is at the threshold of change. This can be seen when the young Maghrebian characters say that multi-culturalism is not yet really happening because there are only first generations of migrants. But later, we can see the seeds of change when Ramsis films an Arab man and a Spanish woman with their child explaining that neither of them will bring him up in a particular religious faith, neither Catholic nor Muslim. Nevertheless, this interview is telling in that this couple speaks of different matters: on the one hand the Arab man refers to more public matters like migrant issues, whereas the Spanish woman only speaks about matters regarding their child's education. This also leads to the naturalisation of the traditional role of women as carers of the family relegated to the private domestic sphere. The Spanish female voiceover of the scene in the tube entrance was also confined to the private or domestic sphere because she is imagined at home telling a bedtime story to her child.

Stam and Spence affirm that 'Questions of image scale and duration, […], are intricately related to the respect afforded a character and the potential for audience sympathy, understanding and identification' (1983: 17). In *El otro lado* male characters in general are afforded more time and agency that naturalise their intellectual knowledge referring to many issues about history, law, organisations, and education. The result, then, is a space where masculine authority and 'reason' are naturalized. Migrant and Spanish men have more to say due to their superior level of knowledge and understanding, whereas migrant and particularly Spanish women are depicted as if they were not as educated and interesting, showing a much more racist approach in their comments.

8.5 The use of music

This documentary makes use of a great deal of music, both diegetic and extradiegetic. Music is placed on a level of importance equal to or greater than that of speech. In this film, music is the narrator, the commentator, and the connective device. As Simon Featherstone states, 'musical traditions transcribe the most intimate histories of culture, where sounds, languages and bodies meet [...] they provide particularly valuable materials for a study of postcolonialism and its concerns with diasporic experience' (2005: 33). According to Malkmus and Armes, Egypt sings its stories (1991: 145) and Ramsis' own cultural tradition comes to play an important role in the construction of the identity of the film.

Ramsis seems to want to create a link to connecting different communities through music. Laura Marks states that 'cinema can be the site of new configurations of sense knowledge, produced in (or in spite of) the encounter between different cultures' (2000: 195). One North African migrant says that there is a growing lack of cultural interchange in the quarter, and this is followed by a shot of two migrants, one from Africa and another from Bangladesh playing music together. This shows the intention of Ramsis to demonstrate that music plays an important role in development of interculturality since it brings different people together. As Marks states 'cinema uses its audiovisual means to build images around memories' (2000: 71): the Bengali singer is playing his guitar, finding the tune to sing a hymn of Bangladesh, and the images show his African co-performer trying to accompany the other's guitar and voice with his tam-tam, while the camera moves around to witness the audience gathering to listen to this song. Some of the people gathered around probably come from Bangladesh themselves and some others probably from other places in the world. The scene draws upon memories, cultural memories together with a representation of the displacement of the sound and the faces in it, but most of all, it draws upon the construction of the multicultural sound and multicultural images in a new space.

Another example of this is when the Cuban duet, man and woman, sing the popular Cuban song 'Déjala que siga andando' ('let her keep walking', my translation). They change the lyrics to add Lavapiés to it, adding to their musical cultural memory the new constructed musical mixture in the new space. This entails a reverse syncretism since Cuban music is the expression of the rhythms brought by Spanish colonizers and African slaves to the island. Now the song is being transformed and is becoming something new, like the characters and the space portrayed in the documentary.

Interestingly, singers do not speak and speakers do not sing. Some of the characters, therefore, express their political views through music and others present a cultural musical fusion among themselves and the locals. The political messages find in the music the channel to communicate things that would probably be more difficult to express without the freedom that music gives them. For instance one of the songs says 'si se va el gilipollas del Aznar' ('if Aznar, the dickhead, leaves', my translation), which is a strong political statement against the Prime Minister at the time. Ramsis shows himself witnessing the performance sitting next to them. Ramsis' position here is similar to many other scenes when he sits next to the performers, including himself in the prerogatives and denunciation of their lyrics. He is therefore politically positioning himself with the performers' claims and clearly marking his film as a critique of the political government as well as of the Spanish socioeconomic structures of power.

Another example of extradiegetic or commentative music comes from Spanish songwriter Luis Pastor and the Brazilian Chico César in 'En las fronteras del mundo' ('At the world's borders', my translation). This song intensifies the creation of a melting pot through music and dance where Spanish and foreign differences blur. Various images of different migrants' faces combine with the lyrics of the song 'En las fronteras del mundo' that says: 'soy tú, soy él, y muchos que aquí no llegan...nosotros y todos ellos, esclavos del nuevo siglo, obligados a un destierro, desterrados de la vida, condenados a un infierno...' ('I am you, I am him, and many others who don't arrive here...us and all of them, slaves of the new century, forced into exile, exiled from life, condemned to a hell...', my translation). The song, therefore, addresses all audiences but with two different singers in two different ways: 'I am you', addressing directly the migrant, and 'I am him', addressing the non-migrant. The music here has the powerful effect of creating a fluidity of identities, characters, voices and messages, placing them and us in a context of internal and external movement. The confusion of 'you' and 'him' undermines the idea of fixed subject positions.

The lyrics 'soy tú, soy él, en un nuevo paraiso' ('I am you, I am him, in a new paradise', my translation) join the images of old and dirty buildings that migrants are stuck in. The music adds emphasis to the images, showing a strong contrast between lyrics and images. The song becomes a lament, a proclamation of sorrow that accompanies images of migrants of all ages, saying 'illegals without rights, or legals without words' or ' rich people building their wealth with your children's blood', (my translation). We see images of a man working in the road and a child running in a building site. The song finishes with 'en las fronteras del mundo' and a shot of a banner already seen in the documentary *Si nos dejan* (Torres, 2004), which reads 'no human being is illegal' (my translation). The song works as a scene of dissensus where the 'forsaken of this world' sing their claims, therefore raising their voices to establish their position in society and blaming those who create and perpetuate their marginality as well as take advantage of it.

On the other hand, the song 'Vengo de Lavapiés' ('I come from Lavapiés', my translation') by Spanish group La Cabra Mecánica serves to look at the square of Lavapiés with a stop motion from dawn to dusk in fast motion, with a flux of all the different passers-by coming and going in the square of the quarter, with the entrance to the tube station in the middle of the frame, watching people coming in and out. Ramsis places the viewer in the middle of this flux of passer-by subjects while the lyrics say 'vengo, voy, vengo, voy' ('I come, I go, I come, I go', my translation), thus intensifying the mobility of all the characters, stressing the transitory and changing nature of the space and its subjects and enlarging the fluctuating audiovisual experience. All of this creates the vision of a transitional space where everybody is in transit, therefore creating equality among human beings as members of the same transitional space.

This equality also works to reinforce the dissensuality, as it allows the message of the film to reach the audience and create spectatorial identification. According to Naficy, and as already stated, this transitional quality in the film's arguments and its fluidity and liminality contribute to the raising of what he calls 'significant questions about political agency and about the ethic of identity politics' (2001: 32). Similarly, for Massey, time and space must engage in accounting for a global sense of place 'as woven together out of ongoing stories, as a moment within power-geometries, as a particular constellation within the wider topographies of space, and as in

process, as unfinished business' (2005: 130-131). This is achieved also by the way Ramsis keeps connecting the past of Lavapiés to the present in an attempt to reflect on how power-geometries have developed over the centuries in this particular space, never static but always changing. As Massey argues in favour of a fluid representation of space, this is clearly a way of rendering these changing spaces as something enriching and positive but always subjected to contestation and political struggle.

Live music comes from the voices of migrants like Aida Phinney and Vicente Hessing, and again their song says 'mi rumba la baila el alemán, y tambien el francés, incluso el musulmán, mi rumba no tiene fronteras', ('the German and also the French dance my rumba and even the Muslim, my rumba has no borders' my translation). With this, the film emphasises the universality of music and how it creates links among cultures, reinforcing the borderless tone of the documentary. The last musical theme with the final credits is a song called 'Babel', which invites us to imagine a world with common spaces, different languages and cultural understanding. This tune ends the film with the longing for an ideal world where all people can share and live together happily ever after. This gives Ramsis the opportunity to give us a final message, his wish for an utopic world, but this is ironic since the film in general does not convey the idea of an ideal world where all communities can share and live without conflict, but rather shows how there are struggles, discussions and an uncertain future for the multiculturality of Lavapiés. Interestingly, music is the tool Ramsis uses to appeal to our cultural senses, because music transports us to other places and can work against the fragmentation of different human communities. Music in the film is not chaotic; it has rhythm and is well played and sung. It functions as a political act, not only expressing cultures and social landscapes, but also communicating ways to participate in society and enact migrants' rights in Spain. Music, therefore, strengthens dissensus intensely in the film due to its power to unite cultures and human beings under the same framework of political action. All music performers in the film, as well as the non-diegetic music, explicitly do not only refer to political stances that criticise and subvert power structures that exclude and abuse migrants, but they also create a golden thread of international musical language that calls for the inclusion, the fluidity and the mixing-up of all different, by equal, cultures.

8.6 Conclusion

El otro lado creates scene of dissensus by means of many of the aesthetic and narrative aspects of accented cinema: narration by intertitles, transitional time and space, self-reflexivity, liminality and autobiography. It offers a variety of voices, Spanish and newcomers, intermingling faces, speeches and a great amount of music. This fluidity is achieved thanks to the interstitial location of the accented filmmaker who is able to observe and represent the space of Lavapiés with a perspective that invites national and migrant audiences to reflect on their own interstitial locations and states in transitional space with its transitional subjects. Ramsis shows a space that is not self-contained, but instead is linked to many other places beyond, with its uniqueness at a point of intersection. He achieves this externalisation through the images of the tube entrance, through artistic representations like theatrical, musical and dancing performances in the streets and also in enclosed public venues.

This documentary tries to promote questions and doubts, fears and expectations about the interculturality that is taking place in the melting pot of Lavapiés. Ramsis explores how ghettos work, issues of racism, and the conflicts arising when different communities intersect. Moreover, it explores and criticises the way Spanish immigration policies fail to create the space and the resources for integration.

The apparent chaos resulting from this multiplicity of identities is represented as part of the historical past and present of Lavapiés, as a stage in the process of a multicultural existence that this place has gone through all the time. However, Ramsis does not offer hope that this multicultural existence will become one force: on the contrary, he reflects on how different communities mostly keep to themselves, and how the negative consequences of this detachment among different marginal groups affect them. Furthermore, the film looks at the multicultural past of Lavapiés, which is also a reflection of the multicultural past of Spain, although Spaniards have tried hard for five centuries to deny that past. Ramsis wants to draw attention to it as a mechanism to understand what the quarter of Lavapiés is today and what it can become in the future.

While Torres in *Si nos dejan* brings different voices together through montage and unites them in a constructed solidarity as they all become one, Ramsis in *El otro lado* does something quite different with similar matter: he creates a disunited polysemy of voices that clash with each other despite being part of the same struggle. While the former creates solidarity so their voices are more clearly heard and understood by national audiences, the latter stresses the lack of it. In a way, Ramsis's film calls for a different type of mobilisation, one that has more to do with what Spain needs to do with regard to what is happening and has been happening to 'others', and what all migrants in Spain need to do with regard to themselves, that is, to unite to confront and activate their political power against the state.

9. Female Migration and Multiculturalism in *Extranjeras* (Helena Taberna, 2003)

9.1 Introduction

Extranjeras/Foreigners is a 75-minute documentary made in 2002 by Spanish film director Helena Taberna. It offers a collection of interviews where foreign women living in Madrid, particularly in the quarters of Lavapiés and Alcalá, talk to the camera about their experiences of immigration and adaptation to their life in the new country. The interviews intend to provide an exploration of immigration from a female point of view and try to offer a positive and optimistic account of the multicultural city that Madrid had recently become. With this aim the documentary offers portrayals of women from a great range of nationalities, ages and social backgrounds. They come from Algeria, Bangladesh, China, Colombia, The Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Iraq, Morocco, Peru, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Syria, Senegal, Sudan, Ukraine and Venezuela.

Taberna intended to offer, for the first time in Spanish documentary film, an account of female migration, since at the time most films and documentaries focused on male migrants. As Solé and Parella (2010) point out, also referring to the work of Morokvasic (1993) and Ribas (2004), there is a great diversification in the female migratory experience and many of the women arriving in Europe and Spain, particularly those coming from Latin American countries, are pioneers of the migratory process and the ones who start the migratory chains. They explain how these women are primarily attracted by the demand for domestic work and secondly by the demand for sexual services. *Extranjeras* also attempts to comply with what Kofman promotes as the need to reclaim 'the heterogeneity of migrant women's history and their diverse experiences in the past and the present', noting that 'highlighting the diversity of nationalities, backgrounds, class positions, employment and familiar situations may help to challenge the reductionist frameworks into which migrant women are still placed' (Kofman, 1999: 272).

Taberna reflects to a certain extent on the diversification of female migratory experiences by presenting women with different origins and social backgrounds, some of them being the initiators of their own move and others having followed their male partners. Nevertheless, Taberna is not interested in women from marginal groups. This also makes *Extranjeras* a much lighter and more idyllic version of the representation of migrants in comparison with *El Otro lado* and *Si nos dejan*, creating a documentary that seeks to offer Madrid as a multicultural city through a variety of faces, foods, languages and religious traditions that the female characters continue to recreate in the space of the new city. Nevertheless, despite the variety of voices, nationalities, backgrounds and experiences found in *Extranjeras*, there is a lack of depth in the interviews, with very limited attention to political contestation or conflict, either in the content, as explained before, or in the form, as some of the formal filmic techniques used reveal a certain reductionist framework.

Taberna offers a portrayal of mostly independent, determined, and especially 'nice' women who have managed to find a certain financial and emotional stability in Spain through 'respectable' or legal work. As Ballesteros points out, migrant women have gained agency and have been able to

invert patriarchal roles as 'they become breadwinners in their own households and working permit holders'. For Ballesteros, thanks to domestic work, migrant women use 'traditional feminine skills toward an improvement of their economies both at home and in the receiving country' (2005: 8). Taberna offers a representation of this reality focusing on domesticity and cultural traditions, but avoids Spain's other socio-political realities of female immigration, including prostitution, crime, or irregular status. Instead, the film takes the viewer on a reassuring journey of multicultural discovery that seems at times more like a pleasurable tourist excursion than a documentary that would work to present the difficulties and the political problematic that female migrants from Third World countries suffer in Europe. Taberna explains how she seeks to avoid the sexual stereotyping and reductive assumptions common in media reports and many other fictional Spanish films. In Taberna's own words: 'That was my challenge, to take the smallest lives, the apparently less interesting ones, since these are never in the news, and avoid the most dramatic elements like "pateras" and prostitution.' (Cited in Ballesteros, 2005: 9, my translation).

The women in *Extranjeras* talk about their cultural traditions and how they try to keep them alive, something that seems a very easy thing to do given the variety of schools, churches, shops and even street meeting-points where they go to meet fellow migrants every week. This offers a vision of Madrid as an inclusive and ideal multicultural city where all migrants are able to live a life that is similar to the life they could be living in their home countries, minus the relatives they have left behind, but plus the financial and social security that they probably lacked at countries of origin. This representation, though, focuses on reinforcing the idea of the 'good' migrant to remove any association with danger or threat that the newcomers could pose for the nationals. Thus, this documentary works in such a way as to imply that there is in fact a need to remove the threat element traditionally attached to foreigners from poorer countries. Nevertheless, the argument should be about why matter if migrants are good or bad people, positive or negative contributors to the economy of the host country. Why does it matter if they are more or less civilized than nationals when what it is necessary and key in the debate is to stress that they are equals regardless of their inner nature and their socioeconomic background and potential. It is even more necessary to point out that acknowledging migrants as equals must not be dependent upon how similar they are or how similar they can become to nationals.

In this chapter, I will examine the methods this documentary employs to represent female migrant subjectivities and discuss the extent to which their representation contributes to the creation of scenes of dissensus, particularly in the sense of how traditional and hegemonic views of female migration can be challenged or subverted by means of documentary representation. As Kaplan states, 'studying images of women, from whatever perspective or within whatever research method, problematizes and raises questions about the relationship of aesthetics to politics and to cultures' (2000: 1).

Amal Treacher, in her article 'On Postcolonial Subjectivity', explores the 'relationship between coloniser and colonised', and claims the need to understand 'the continuing and damaging social and psychic effects and consequences on all subjectivities formed within this particular political and social constellation' (2005: 43). She also cites Ashis Nandy to refer to the way the West and the non-West is constructed around a view that divides the two according to the absolute superiority of the West over the rest 'of polarised discourses that center on the normal and the

abnormal, the developed and the undeveloped, the vanguard and the led, the liberated and the salvable' (Nandy, 1983: x, cited in Treacher, 2005: 43).

Bearing these ideas in mind I will explore to what extent Taberna achieves a deconstruction of this polarity by creating dissensus or whether, on the contrary, she reinforces the division and therefore reinforces the consensual worldview that places the Western woman in a superior position with respect to the non-Western woman, thus considering herself responsible for their well-being and liberation. This consensual discourse equates female migrants with female otherness, and it involves the process of reinforcing and intensifying the distance and the isolation of the women characters by differentiating them from the idea of the modern Western woman.

As Léger states, citing Fredric Jameson, we should attempt to conceive 'the dominant cultural logic against which genuine difference can be assessed, and to project some conception of a new systematic cultural norm and its reproduction in order to reflect more adequately on the most effective forms of any radical cultural politics today' (Jameson 1991: 6, cited in Léger, 2010: 162). To a certain extent, Taberna's documentary works as an example of how, by representing multiculturalism in Madrid, she is promoting a de-politicisation of difference, which diverts attention from forms of oppression that migrants suffer in Spain. Léger's request to understand how the dominant cultural logic works in order to conceive a way of disrupting it with radical cultural politics is precisely what the analysis of this documentary sets out to do.

The main basis of this analysis will be the strain between dissensus and consensus that the documentary offers as it focuses on domesticity and a certain kind of multiculturalism as the golden thread in learning about female migrants in Madrid. By doing so, it also reinforces the depoliticisation of the migrants' differences, as they serve to prove how integrated they are in Spain as they keep their traditions in the private sphere. The film does not acknowledge how those differences are forced into invisibility in the public sphere. I will explore the way the film exemplifies the tension between dissensus, or the staging of political equality and identification, and consensus, or the reinforcing of difference and otherness that prevents the characters from becoming political subjects able to claim their rights and positions within Spanish society, not only within the private sphere of their lives, but also, and more importantly, within the public domain of affairs, the crucial domain where radical politics can take place.

9.2 Multiculturalism

Laura Marks refers to critics, such as Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) and Fatimah Tobing Rony (1996), '[w]ho have noted the specifically Western character of visuality as one that objectifies others, isolates self from others and attempts to master external and internal worlds' (Marks, 2000: 133). To a certain extent, Taberna exemplifies Minh-ha's and Rony's ideas since her documentary at times reinforces stereotypes, which may perpetuate migrant women's otherness while it also imagines foreign women as aspiring to become Europeanized and modernized because this will help them integrate more easily into Spanish society. With regard to this, the film does to a certain extent reinforce the idea of multiculturalism as a principle that seeks to celebrate difference only when this difference does not endanger Western female principles. For this

reason, Taberna concentrates on all those elements (domesticity, motherhood and even feminist ideals) that unite women all over the world, trying to establish a link between foreign and national women so that integration is not only desirable but also viable and possible.

The problem with this vision of Madrid as a successful multicultural city is that as everything seems nicely presented and works well, why would anyone want to contest it? Shohat and Stam state that 'the concept of "multiculturalism" is polysemically open to various interpretations and subject to diverse political force-fields' (1994: 47), becoming 'an empty signifier on to which diverse groups project their hopes and fears' (Ibid). For Shohat and Stam, this 'multiculturalism' in its more coopted version 'degenerates into a state or corporate-managed United-Colors-of-Benetton pluralism whereby established powers promote ethnic "flavors of the month" for commercial or ideological purposes' (Ibid). Although *Extranjeras* poses mildly some of the difficulties of some of the migrant characters, generally it works to promote a 'gorgeous mosaic' or 'ethnic stew', to use some of the metaphors that Shohat and Stam mention in their account of the political responses to multiculturalism in the USA. As this film was subsidized by the Spanish government's Ministry for Education and Culture, it seems that Taberna is to certain extent complying with how the government tries to project the image of Madrid as a multicultural city, diversified and enriched by the new arrivals where locals and migrants are encouraged into a mutual embrace, but always leaving the Spanish local community at the top of the cultural pyramid as the 'major' or normative group. However, I analyse this film under the same perspective which Shohat and Stam advocate, that is a radical multiculturalism able to offer a profound critique of power relations that 'has to do less with artifacts, canons, and representations than with the communities "behind" the artifacts' and 'that calls for a profound restructuring and reconceptualization of the power relations between cultural communities' (1994: 47). By doing so I will demonstrate that *Extranjeras*' portrayal of multiculturalism has more to do consensus than with dissensus, the former being closer to the idea of a 'liberal pluralist discourse' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 48) and the latter more similar to Shohat and Stam's idea of radical multiculturalism or 'Polycentric multiculturalism' that is not about 'touchy-feely' sensitivity toward other groups, but about dispersing power and transforming subordinating institutions and discourses. For Shohat and Stam, polycentric multiculturalism thinks and imagines 'minoritarian communities not as "interest groups" to be "added on" to a preexisting nucleus but rather as active, generative participants at the very core of a shared, conflictual history' (1994: 48).

Watson problematises the notion of multiculturalism and the multicultural. According to him, the term 'multicultural' creates 'not just a sense of differences but also' recognises 'those differences as springing from a universally shared attachment to the importance of culture and to an implicit acknowledgement of the equality of all cultures' (Watson, 2000: 2). So far this agrees with what Taberna's documentary is set to proclaim, as all different cultures appearing in the film are presented in a positive way; however, this is only achieved in theory, because in practice, as we will see, not all cultures are presented equally.

On the other hand, 'Watson defines "multiculturalism" as a principle to be acted upon' that 'requires from us all a receptivity to difference, an openness to change, a passion for equality, and an ability to recognize our familiar selves in the strangeness of others' (2000: 110). This definition is a rather problematic one to put into practice, albeit quite nice in theory. If we apply

this idea to *Extranjeras,* we see that this is again what Taberna tries to offer, although not always successfully. The film may promote to a certain extent this receptivity to difference, but it is always a difference that we do not sense would interfere with Spanish values. Then, the final element that Watson refers to is the need to recognize familiarity in the unfamiliar other, but this may also demonstrate how we need to place the foreign on one's own terms so he/she can be understood and then accepted. In any case, this should not be the way to look at it, but instead we should try to find our own strangeness, our own unfamiliar other within ourselves by means of familiarizing ourselves with the foreign others. As Julia Kristeva writes, and as it has already been mentioned, 'the question arising is no longer that of welcoming the foreigner within a system that obliterates him but rather that of promoting the togetherness of those foreigners that we all recognize ourselves to be' (1991: 3). In this way, the foreign others do not need to offer what they have in common with the majority group so they feel included (and obliterated), but it is precisely their difference that becomes of interest, their unfamiliarity is what will and should promote a sense of identification, as we are all capable of understanding that we are all strangers to ourselves to a certain extent. Looking at what makes us different makes us more equal whilst allowing us to keep our differences intact. However, trying to look for what makes us equal removes the right of the minorities, or of those considered less privileged, to those differences, as they will be considered less necessary or productive than the differences of the majority or dominant group.

In Spain, the multicultural project has been and continues to be a challenge, partly due to the novelty of the immigration phenomenon, but especially because of the way Spanish administration is organized. In Spain, the Integration Law came into force on 26 November 2008 to comply with article 9.2 of the Spanish Constitution whereby the public powers must promote the conditions to make effective and real the freedom and equality of each citizen and of the groups in which he/she integrates, to remove the obstacles that prevent his/her fulfilment and favour the participation of all citizens in the political, economic, cultural and social life in the country.

Thus, the Spanish model is intended to be defined as intercultural or integrationist (Vansteenberghe, 2012: 232) but the existence of different administrative levels in Spain (state, regional, provincial and even municipal in some cases) has proven to be a limit to the integration of new citizens, as different interventions models have co-existed at the different layers of administration where the impediments to implementing the integrationist model allow for the other two models (the Assimilationist, or French, and the Multicultural, or Anglo-Saxon) to come into play, giving way to the co-existence of the three models in the national territory, and even at the same time in the same regions (Vansteenberghe 2012: 232). Vansteenberghe explains the failure of both the multicultural and the assimilation models, as they do not provide the basis for foreigners to be respected and considered as equals. On the one hand he notes that, although in theory the Multicultural model was based initially on the notion of equality, there exists a hierarchization of the different cultural groups leading to the dominant cultural group deciding how to organize the social fabric (2012: 228). On the other hand, the Assimilation model, having arisen from the colonisation process to provide the rest of the world with the norms and rules of Western civilization, requires the foreigner to lose his/her own identity and become a member of the dominant culture. As Vansteenberghe explains, this French model is apparently easier to manage, but it is exclusionary for all those groups who do not ascribe to these ideals (2012: 229).

This is especially the case with Jews and Muslims whose religious differences are not respected at a public level in a dominant republic and secular French society. Therefore, as Vansteenberghe argues following Berry (2005), integration implies the possibility of participating in the host culture at the same time as one is able to participate and maintain one's own cultural heritage. Thus, 'integration must be promoted through intercultural practices, through culture meetings, mutual understanding, mutual observation and a personalized and increasing mutual knowledge' (2012: 230).

Taberna's documentary relentlessly tries to focus on how Madrid is offering plenty of opportunities for these intercultural practices and how it promotes mutual observation and understanding. Many of the locations appearing in the film are considered as traditionally representative of Spanishness, and Taberna looks for, and to a certain extent achieves, a cultural merging by shooting these women from all over the world in spaces usually considered symbolic of Spanish tradition, and by offering 'a tour of the world but inside the heart of Madrid' (Costa-Villaverde, 2007: 88). This attempt at merging is best shown in the sequences where the authentic and traditional music and dress of the Madrid summer fair interacts with the celebration of the Chinese New Year. It is important to take into account that Madrid has only recently become a cosmopolitan city compared to other cities like London, Paris or New York, and this documentary provides an exploration of those changes through the interaction of popular festivities and traditional folklore, including music, clothing, dancing and aesthetics from the new cultures that coexist in Madrid. The initial shots of the celebrations of the Chinese Year are presented with the traditional Madrid song 'Por la Puerta de Alcalá' ('By Alcala's Gate', my translation). The Spanish component of the portrayal creates a new version of the Chinese Year celebration in a Madrileño ('castizo') style, as it is combined with the traditional Madrid Summer Fair.

Similarly, Taberna shows the association of 'Intercultural Cuisine' where migrant women gather to cook different traditional dishes from their countries. The dishes and the women's hands appear on screen with shiny, bold colours that invite us to look and enjoy. Taberna tries to shows the positive connection between migrant women and domesticity and how food brings these women together. At this point, it is relevant to turn to Laura Marks' *The Skin of the Film*, where she states that:

> [i]ntercultural cinema has quite specific reasons for appealing to the knowledge of the senses, insofar as it aims to represent configurations of sense perception different from those of modern Euro-American societies [...] A related difference between intercultural cinema and other kinds of experimental and mainstream cinema is that it stresses the social character of embodied experience: the body is a source not just of individual but of cultural memory (2000: p xiii).

In light of this, how does Taberna represent the 'unrepresentable' senses, such as touch, smell, and taste? Is she exoticizing and thereby serving up to the audience the sensuous life of other cultures on a platter for easy consumption?

With Polish, Ukranian and Romanian characters, that is, with white migrants, Taberna interestingly creates a link between Spanish and Eastern European cultures by means of evoking the knowledge of the senses in order to call upon cultural memory. We witness the Orthodox Mass Services where candles and incense are burning at the altar; we may appreciate the intense colours in the image of Jesus, and the painted walls and ceilings. Service attendants walk slowly to receive the body of Christ, some in tears implying feelings of displacement, nostalgia and emotional devotion, with the diegetic sound of the hymns. These colours, textures and imagined smells ask the viewer to recall their own memories of the sensorial experience, as Spanish people will be familiar with Catholic ritual and its sensual aspects. However, although the intention may have been to create a level of proximity between cultures, the intensified sensorial experience, especially when showing religious practices, may result in a distancing from the subject more than in a rapprochement. Marks (2002: 231) recalls Hamid Naficy's suggestion that smell, taste, and touch 'often provide, more than sight and hearing, poignant reminders of difference and of separation from homeland' (Naficy 1993: 153), but, while Taberna offers some signs of difference, she also merges them with familiar Spanish elements, which contributes to a portrayal of the women as not so distant and separated from their homelands, as they are generally easily recreating their lives in the new country that does not seem to be resisting this difference at a political level, much less at a private one.

Similarly, scenes when Bangladeshi and African women are cooking show close shots of their hands, the different food being cooked, the richness of the textures, flavours being intensified by the darker colour of the hands of these women, their strong accent speaking Spanish or their use of their mother tongue, the texture and rich colour of the clothes they are wearing, their traditional hair styles and make-up. All these elements are combined to evoke the difference between cultures, and Taberna intensifies the effect by showing difference in the private sphere, in their homes cooking, especially because cooking unavoidably reduces women to the domestic framework and gives the impression that these foreign women can only resort to their domestic knowledge to be of interest to the spectatorship. We are invited to imagine the smells of the different food while it is being cooked, served and tasted by the Bangladeshi community. The camera lingers on the oil frying spiced onions, the smell being visualised is foreign to most Spaniards and the effect it creates may be ambiguous. As Marks also points out, citing Classen, '[f]oreign cultures tend to be both vilified and exoticized in terms of smell. It appears to be universal, and is certainly understandable; that every culture prefers its own world of smells to any other' (Classen, 1993: 79-80, cited in Marks, 2000: 203).

This practice of offering a cultural and, to a lesser extent, social merging is positive and it is representative as such; however, the film does not account for how the foreign women are engaging in political and economic activities in a wider sense. The emphasis is placed on the women's cultural traditions and moral norms on the one hand, and on their ambitions to do well (legally) on the other. This is, then, mainly a sympathetic and reassuring portrayal of female migrants so they are not characterised as posing a threat to Spanish national values. In order to achieve this, women's smiles are central in the film from the start when the women's faces are introduced to the viewer smiling with a soothing music, interestingly enough quite similar to the type of music used in baby cradle's music equipment. The images anticipate the kind of drama-free documentary that is about to come, and in this way it also reassures the viewer about the fact

that these women are not problematic or controversial, as they are presented as a colourful and enriching addition to the host culture.

The migrant women call for an awakening of Spanish women's rights and defend their need to continue with their cultural traditions, their languages, their foods and their religious practices. All this, however, is kept within the private domain, complying with the multicultural project that Rex (2010) refers to: all cultural difference is celebrated as long as it is kept to the private and communal spaces, as long as in the public domain these traditions do not affect the unitary society model.

In *Extranjeras* the women talk about family, morality and religious matters, all of which is common to all women, but which also belongs in the private sphere, whereas, as Rex states, 'the institutions of law, politics and the economy are institutions of the public domain', and we do not see any of the women addressing any substantial opinion from the standpoint of any of these institutions. Although the Chinese and the Muslim schools which appear in the film do educate the migrants' children according to their cultures, these do not seem to be concerned exclusively with 'transmission of skills and the perpetuation of civic culture' (Rex, 2010: 229), but mainly with language, moral education and the inculcation of religious belief, which as Rex explains belong to the private domain. As cultural difference is reduced to the private sphere, there is no conflict of public interest, and therefore no need to change the status quo. The minority groups embodied by the female migrants in this film do not appear as hierarchically subordinated to the mainstream national group, nor to the patriarchal authority of their male partners, and therefore consensus will prevail because there is no need for conflict, as there is no reference to the hegemony of a dominant majority group. Where there is no conflict, there is consensus, and therefore no need to talk about dissensus.

The problem with this model is that, as Rex argues, 'we would do an injustice to the religious, cultural and political ideas of minority groups if we saw them as fitting easily and snugly into the social status quo' (2010: 228). For Rex, conflict is positive as it leads to notions of social equalities and the contestation of social order. Léger's ideas are also relevant here, since *Extranjeras* mainly promotes the idea of a successful capitalist system that allows for the integration of foreign women, especially thanks to their domesticity and good traditional morality.

Žižek refers to Alain Badiou who criticises in his work *Ethics*, the 'ethics of difference as micro-political strategies that tend to impose models of behavior and the promotion of a vulgar sociology, a tourist's fascination with diversity that is indifferent to truth' (Léger, 2013: 29). As Taberna shows an interest in learning more about all the faces and cultures that she started to see in her neighbourhood, I will argue that what Taberna actually does is a reflection of this touristic fascination with difference that does not go far enough into the truth of the lives of the female migrants in Madrid. Consequently, her documentary serves to perpetuate consensus instead of creating dissensus, as it does not exemplify or request the need to demand the social, political and economic participation of all migrants, regardless of their functions, countries of origin and personalities.

9.3 The Female Migrant and the Idea of the Western Modern Woman

Historically, documentaries have shown an interest in the portrayal of marginalised subjects of society. Gayatri Spivak (1995, 2000) challenges the idea that marginal people can speak with a more authentic voice. This is because 'all groups are embedded within social and political relations and no group or class of people is outside of social relations', then, 'while marginalized groups do act and speak from a different place it is still a place of appropriation' (Cited in Treacher, 2005: 45). The place of this documentary is still a place included inside social relations of power and control.

Traditionally, migrant women had received little attention because they were considered as the passive or secondary subjects of the migratory process, mainly following their spouses to the new countries. According to Kofman, '[t]his model of male dominance succeeded by family reunification seems to fit better those groups who are culturally the most distant from the host society' (1999: 275). *Extranjeras* partly reflects this model as it presents some women following their husbands to Spain, but it also offers numerous examples of women as initiators of the migratory process, this being mainly the case for the Latin American migrants.

In this documentary, we hear about the different backgrounds and reasons for these women to leave their countries, sometimes leaving children and spouses behind, waiting to be able to reunite again in the future by going back or by earning enough money to afford to bring their families to Spain. Fanta from Sudan, Margarita and Falcón from Ecuador, Lala from The Dominican Republic, among many others, are examples of women initiating the migratory journey and being in charge of their own destinies. Fanta owns a hairdressing salon, Margarita sold everything to be able to come to Madrid, Falcón owns a *locutorio* (an establishment with a number of phone booths for public use), Oyola from Perú owns a bar and helps other migrants: she tells us with a surprising lack of dramatism that she had to leave Peru because she was an activist for women's rights and the terrorist group Sendero Luminoso was threatening to kill her.

All the women seem to enjoy a great degree of financial stability and social comfort, and more importantly they all seem to meet the standards of the Western modern woman, as they are business orientated, independent and determined without transgressing any norm traditionally associated with female domesticity. In this way, the adult women have jobs with more or less responsibility, but they are also wives and on many occasions mothers who look after their daughters and elder relatives, and who keep a strong attachment to their cultural traditions, especially language, religion and food.

In the case of the younger generation of female migrants, mostly the daughters of the first generation of migrant characters in the film, they are even more integrated into Spanish society. These are all students in secondary and tertiary education, with many Spanish friends, and who do not want to be considered as 'others'. These are mainly characters from China, Latin American and Eastern European countries; all of them have lived in Madrid for a good period of time, and therefore the daughters speak Spanish fluently and without any foreign accent. These can be considered the second generation of female migrants in Spain, and Taberna offers a reassuring depiction of how well integrated and Europeanised these girls are now and how smoothly this integration has been, with the exception of a racist attack that one of the Polish

girls suffered from Spanish gypsies in school when she first arrived. However this incident is something that is totally resolved now as she speaks and looks Spanish, and so she can feel like any other Spanish girl and does not suffer discrimination for being Polish. There is also another exception, as we will later see when we analyse the Muslim girls' interviews in their school. In all these accounts, Taberna tries to reduce the drama to the minimum, keeping an optimistic and positive review of the women's stories and trying to create and maintain female spectatorial identification.

With regard to women who have arrived more recently, the portrayals of Roksana and Rabaya Begun, the two migrants from Bangladesh, are significant. Roksana narrates her migratory experience in her mother tongue (she does not speak Spanish yet) while she is cooking. She highlights the fact of coming alone to Spain to meet her boyfriend. Soon after, the Imam at their local Mosque married them. While she is recounting her migratory experience, the camera often focuses on the food she is cooking. Even though the ingredients seem quite different from Spanish food, she does not refer at any time to what she is cooking, which would at least have given the viewer the opportunity to learn more about Roksana's traditions. As Pajaczkowska and Young argue, 'if cultural belonging-ness resides in those discourses which call upon collective memory, then with a lack of access to the elements of that memory, along with a sense of dislocation comes a feeling of loss of cultural cohesion' (2000: 367). Taberna tries to bridge the gap and seeks to allow Roksana to maintain this cultural cohesion. The main reason why Roksana is portrayed as she is, demonstrates how, for her, life in Madrid can be a continuation of her life in Bangladesh: she is cooking Bangladeshi food, she has been married in a Mosque by the local Iman and she enjoys Bangladeshi TV in the comfort of her home. Everything fits perfectly in the life of these women as they are able to live the Bangladeshi life minus the lack of freedom that, according to her own words, women have there. Once she is completely integrated and at ease with her new life, Taberna only needs to make appear her longing for the freedom that Spanish women have. Thus, while the whole Bangladeshi family eats the food she has cooked earlier in front of the camera, both women express their admiration for Spanish women: 'Women in our country do not go out. Here it is different; women go out and can meet people. Women can work and it is not a problem, men and women are equals. I like the fact that women can work. Women in my country depend on their fathers or husbands' (Roksana in *Extranjeras)*.

Both women admire this supposed gender equality, and since they are saying this in front of their husbands, it implies that they may even become more similar to the category of modern Spanish women. Both women sit at the table while men are standing in a corner of the frame. Taberna gives these men a secondary role, somehow relegating them to the different position that they must face in the new culture, or in the film as imposed by Taberna as she mediates and reinforces the potentially changing gender conditions of these women through her use of the camera, which dwells on the men's silent faces, while the two women are expressing how much they like the independence of Spanish women.

These ideas link women's mobility with economic independence, since once women can leave the domestic space, they can work and consequently earn a living. Taberna makes use of the camera to reinforce the mobility these women are increasingly achieving in Spain. We see Roksana walking down the street and, as Rodriguez suggests, 'the scene communicates and transfers those advances in the physical and vital mobility that will accompany these women

inevitably' (2003). As she is then moving smoothly into progressive Western femininity, she seems to aspire to the dominant culture of Spain, where woman go out and can be economically independent. After cooking in her small kitchen, she refers to how women in her country are kept at home cooking and immediately after this she says that she likes how Spanish women go out. This speech stresses how differently this woman sees herself from Spanish women, taking them as the example to follow, when the reality is that many Spanish women are the ones exclusively doing the cooking (and the cleaning) in their homes. The impression that Roksana gives is that she is willing to become more Spanish in the public sphere, going out and finding a job, which complies with the idea that she will be cooking her Bangladeshi meals at home while she will adapt to mainstream society, becoming a Western woman in the public domain. The fact that she is at the concert at night with the other women in the final scene indicates this progression to a more independent lifestyle. Nevertheless, we must always keep in mind that this progression has been created or promoted for the film: Taberna has, in fact, organized the gathering. Then this progression comes from the hand of the embodiment of the Western woman herself, Taberna, as director of the film and at the centre of the final shot with the rest of migrants, looking at the viewer to demonstrate that the multicultural embrace is possible.

At this point Treacher's ideas are relevant:

> Women can be doubly positioned as oppressed and as oppressors. 'White' women (a problematic description but the only one available) can feel much concern towards women from 'third world countries' which is underpinned by the assumption that these women are being oppressed by their backward men and therefore need to be saved by the forces of modernity, and their more advanced sisters. These judgments are made as if women from North America and Europe are secure, liberated and do not have to struggle within unequal power and material relations. In short – the judgments are made from a position of supposed superiority (2005: 46).

Taberna dominates the space, mediates and uses the characters by means of positioning and framing to strengthen the idea that in Spain, women's identities and gender relation issues are more positive and advanced than in Bangladesh. By focusing on men's faces at this point, viewers may find comfort and rejoice with the implied imposition of the circumstances, in which the Bangladhesi men are not totally at ease with their wives' comments but can do nothing to prevent them speaking like this. In this way, Taberna imposes herself on all of them and creates her own representation of these women's realities. In addition, it is worth noting how the camera positions the two women against the corner of the room, with men behind them on their right hand side, walls on their left and the camera in front. This positioning reduces their sense of space, freedom and mobility, which is the opposite of what Taberna is trying to convey in the previous scene, when Roksana is walking on the street.

The following scene shows both women sitting one in front of the other, with the television in the middle showing the happy ending of a Bangladeshi film, a wedding. The image at the centre of the screen is that of the groom's face surrounded by a big red heart. Both women are chatting about the robbery in a shop owned by one of their relatives. The camera focuses on one of the

women caressing her black long hair, with an extremely close shot of the hair and then the image of the groom on TV.

Roksana's long, black hair evidences a desire to portray the beauty and the pleasurable features of the woman. Voyeurism is used as a means of looking at otherness and enjoying difference, but the question is to determine whether or not there is an exoticising colonial gaze. The focus on Roksana's black and shiny locks while she caresses them draws attention to difference via voyeurism. Feminist film theorist Mary Ann Doane refers to the way in which women are fractured by the practice of close-ups and extreme close-ups. Doane even suggests that:

> Cinematic images of woman have been so consistently oppressive and repressive that the very idea of a feminist filmmaking practice seems an impossibility. The simple gesture of directing a camera toward a woman has become equivalent to a terrorist act (2000: 86).

For a woman with such dark, long and shiny hair as Roksana's, it appears that it would only be expected that the camera focused attention on it. However, to focus on Roksana's hair quality only responds to a fascination with physical difference, and therefore the only effect it creates is the objectivisation of her body as a site to obtain pleasurable information that stems directly from her physical difference. As this physical objectivisation takes place with other darker-skinned migrants, the Africans Fanta and Paz, it is possible to argue that Taberna exoticizes to a certain extent the bodies of those women with darker physical features. Fanta and Paz, the former a successful businesswoman and the latter a singer, are both single but deeply longing for love. Taberna shows both women's bare legs, one of them sitting and the other sensually dancing. We can even witness closely how Paz looks at herself in the mirror, puts make-up on and applies cream to her body before the performance. This attention to the portrayal of the women's bodies only takes place with the African and the Bangladeshi characters and reflects Taberna's interest in portraying physical difference to provide visual pleasure, which takes away agency as the attention seems to be centred on their bodies more than on what they say. These images contribute to the perpetuation of clichés, exoticizing black women and reducing them to stereotypical representations that render them sexualised. As Ballesteros points out:

> The feminization of the immigration phenomenon is unavoidably linked to the sexualization of its subjects. Stereotyping and exoticization arise from the common assumption of the foreign woman's sexual openness and availability, and are reinforced by race, ethnicity and even nationality in the case of Caribbean black migrants (2005: 9).

However, on other occasions Taberna seeks to identify the African migrants with domesticity and motherhood, and particularly relevant is the scene when two African women talk to Taberna in the flat they share. They take turns to speak, but when they do, both of them hold the same baby in their arms. This portrayal of woman and baby seems to account for a wish to portray black women as domesticated mothers, therefore promoting identification and a certain empathy, and possibly removing any threat that the black foreign women might pose in the imagination of the rather traditional and conservative Spanish society; it seems like Taberna is thereby trying to associate the bodies of the African young women as conforming to a certain image of bodily 'goodness'.

This leads to a tension between dissensus and consensus, since although, on the one hand, Taberna seeks to confront national expectations by challenging traditional assumed roles of Latin American migrant women, on the other hand she also naturalises and reinforces Asian women's otherness with regard to Spanish women, making them appear as more domesticated and male-dependent. Furthermore, African and Afro-Caribbean women are exoticized by drawing attention to their legs and skin and by using more close-shots of their bodies, implying a fascination for difference that leads to stereotyping.

There is a significant contrast between the scenes when the Bangladeshi women are cooking and gossiping in front of a traditional romantic film and ones depicting the Colombian and Ecuadorian migrants who are politically aware, for instance, when they refer to the need for Spanish women not to assume that they have won everything in the gender equality battle. While the Bangladeshi migrants focus on how liberated Spanish women are and how different women's lives are in Bangladesh compared to women in Spain, Latin American women question Spanish women's freedom and advocate continuing the fight for gender equality. How these migrants see Spanish women's lives varies, as the Bangladeshi have spent less time in the country and may know less of the gender inequalities and the machismo that still exist in Spain. Besides, they do not yet speak the language, and so it is more difficult for them to appreciate Spanish women's realities with regard to men. There are not many signs yet of how these women are going to make an impact on the public sphere as they talk always inside their homes.

As these women's speeches evolve mainly around the idea of men and motherhood, Taberna reinforces the idea that men are at the centre of these women's lives, particularly in the case of Roksana and Rabaya, who are embedded in a domestic space where all they do is cooking, looking after babies and watching romantic films. As Spivak argues, there are tropes that 'act together to place the "Third World Woman" in a similar relation to the European woman as imperialism places the colonized to the colonizer' (Cited in Child and Williams 1997: 168). Taberna positions herself in a superior position, taking for granted her responsibility to imagine and contribute to the liberation of these women, which inevitably places the Bangladeshi women in an inferior and unprivileged position to her. It is as if, now they are in Spain, these women are going to be happier, as they will be able to enjoy the joys of freedom that Spanish women have. As Taberna is reinforcing the differences between them and Spanish women, Spanish women may not identify as easily with them. 'Spanish women have more freedom'm my translation, they say, and therefore Spanish women can consider themselves to be in a superior and privileged position.

Taberna achieves a certain degree of political contestation when some migrant women confront and question Spanish women's ideologies and certainties with regard to their role in the traditionally male-dominated Spanish society. For Rancière 'nothing is political in itself, but anything may become political if it gives rise to a meeting of two logics', police logic and egalitarian logic (1999: 32). These women, who are apparently outsiders, feel the right to urge Spanish women to fight for gender equality. They are placing themselves against the police logic, addressing those to whom they feel similar, and acknowledging their responsibility as equals, to remind those who seem to be drifting away from their common fight. The police logic

that separates them as different is brought to meet the egalitarian logic that unites them, and both come together to serve the idea of common objectives and goals.

As this urge to continue the struggle for gender equality is a repeated theme throughout the film, it works as an ideological discourse that directly addresses national female audiences and tries to make them reflect on their position in the current unequal patriarchal system in Spain. In this way, Taberna attempts to mobilise the national female viewer who seems dormant in the eyes of the migrant women, who with the eyes of outsiders can perhaps more clearly see gender inequalities still taking place in Spain. Although there are no explicit references to domestic violence, what the migrant women refer to can also be related to the high rates of domestic abuse and deaths in Spain. As an example, in the year when this film was released, in Spain 54 women were killed by their male partners. According to the National Statistics Office, this figure continued to rise in the following years, with 71 women dying in 2003 and 72 in 2004. For the last twenty years, numbers have been oscillating between 50 and 74: the maximum figure of the last two decades was in 2008, the victims being mainly in their 20s and 30s, and many of them migrants as well.

However, this theme of gender inequality in Spain could have been developed much further to be more politically disruptive, and yet Taberna is not interested in showing contestation at a deeper level. Instead she offers a very light version of what could be a declaration of the country's realities for migrant and Spanish women, so that the film ultimately fails to become political in the sense of creating dissensus. Besides, these women's speeches may also imply how Taberna tries to accommodate them as fitting within this idea of the progressive modern European woman. At the same time, as I will argue below, Taberna reduces the level of controversy and offers her own mild version of female migration in Lavapiés, where everything seems to be idyllic and mostly trouble-free.

Despite this focus on Spanish women through migrant women's comments, and the ideal assumption that these women are integrated in the country, Taberna chooses not to show any image of Spanish women in any kind of direct or indirect interaction with the migrant women. The only image that connects foreign and national women visually in the frame is when Taberna poses at the end of the film in the centre of the image with some of the migrant women in a constructed picture of joint embrace. In the middle of them and as the creator of the film, she firmly establishes her position of superiority, giving a face to the Spanish woman who has been so often mentioned and now is finally unveiled, as she has been off-camera until now. If the women are not presented as equal but as essentially different from Spanish ones, then Spanish women cannot comprehend these migrant women because they are not placed at the same level so the migrants' voices cannot be heard as speech.

Costa-Villaverde writes about *Extranjeras* that '[t]he women in the documentary – if not themselves, their children, especially the young girls – all belong to a new generation of women in Spain, they form part of the category of the new/modern Spanish woman' (2007: 96). If this is what the documentary is set to achieve and in fact does, as Costa-Villaverde affirms, then it is another point that proves how the migrant women and especially their daughters are assumed to have become part of this category which is imposed on them by the way Taberna imagines them in the new space of Madrid. These women are succeeding, not because they are keeping their

identities, but because they are progressing into the idea of the 'modern Spanish woman'. This contrasts with the young Muslim girls who talk in the Islamic school: these girls wear veils while defending, albeit a bit clumsily, their reasons for doing so. The young students expose their arguments, explaining how they feel discriminated against in Spain and defending their culture by saying how special they feel as Muslim women, since they are treated with much care, as if they were 'diamonds' that must be cared for and protected.

The girls are sitting at the desks where a Muslim female teacher from the USA also expresses her view, although in a far more determined, critical and vehement tone. Jordan and Tamosunas refer to how 'formal techniques such as camerawork, framing, editing, lighting, etc., are crucial to the construction of point of view and emotional empathy with the female protagonist' (1998: 134). These formal techniques cannot only work towards a detachment of emotional empathy with the characters, but can also affect the meaning of their words and their political agency. The mise-en-scène shows four girls sitting in two rows in a corner of the room with their teacher standing on their right hand side. The walls of the room appear on both sides and at the back, and the camera in front of all of them. The girls are then fully enclosed by the surrounding walls, their teacher and the camera. This enclosing physical environment conditions the way the viewer receives the girls' images and voices. The effect is that of girls physically secluded and immobilized, and so their speeches defending the use of the veil to cover their heads come across as pre-established arguments learnt by heart inside the four walls of the classroom. Their voices then do not add anything new to the picture, do not unsettle Spanish preconceptions regarding Muslim religious or cultural traditions; instead they show a repeated argumentative pattern that fails to make audiences appreciate that it is not necessarily important to understand cultural and religious difference, but that it is important to be respected and accepted.

Although Taberna may not universalise all migrants through victimisation, she does at times offer a stereotypical rendering that does not go deeper into issues that could involve more political contestation. Some of the women enjoy a higher degree of political agency, holding posts of more responsibility or with more financial success. These women are portrayed in a different way, as they are generally surrounded by more open spaces, which imply a higher level of mobility and freedom. Most women who are not so financially successful are at home and mostly in private spaces, even though they may be working in roles which are typically female ones, like hairdressers, waitresses, cooks and domestic workers. For Jordan and Tamosunas, what is important is:

> The establishment of spectatorial identification with female psychological viewpoints and the centrality of female subject positions. Autobiographical discourse, particularly when it is conveyed through some form of direct address, is perhaps unsurprisingly one of the most powerful structural devices employed to articulate female subjectivity (1998: 134).

Taberna pursues spectatorial identification by means of autobiographical accounts by the migrant women straight to the camera, in an attempt to directly address the viewer. The Dominican Juani and the Chinese Hua Chi talk openly about their feelings, which Juani describes in the following terms: 'I am a half. […] I left everything there but now I have everything here but when I go there I feel like a stranger and that is something I miss', (my translation).

Similarly Hua Chi expresses her displacement feelings by saying that 'the longer you spend away from your "place", the more dramatic the identity crisis becomes' because the feeling of displacement is gradual, it shifts from initially feeling displaced in the new place and culture where you arrive to the feeling of displacement within your own culture when you are able to return, either for a visit or to resettle there. This is something that young Spaniards could not have related to in 2002, but they can relate to it now, with about 400,000 young Spaniards migrating to other places in the world looking for a job from the beginning of 2008 to the end of 2012.

The film also tries to establish a harmonious identification between the foreign women and their new space. There are often shots of common spaces such as the sky covering us all, the underground railway system, various symbolic streets, and monuments recognisable as Madrid landmarks, such as the Alcalá Gate, the Cibeles Fountain, popular areas like Atocha Train Station, Lavapiés, local markets, bars, houses, shops etc., but not always filled up with people, either from national or from different ethnic groups. When these shots are shown they often lack human figures, only showing vehicles in transit or simply the popular landmark on its own.

Taberna tries to show an idealized 'cosmopolitan' space that apparently belongs to everybody equally. At the same time, however, some of the women are confronted by a camera which places them in restricted positions, either standing up behind a bar, or sitting most of the time, or working indoors as opposed to other women, who are more mobile and show more independence, like Olaya, the Latin American activist. These spaces appear then as abstract spaces, using Lefebvre's terminology, or places that are 'governed by the logic of capitalism' (1991: 33), as it does not show how the space of the city and the human bodies are bonded together. This shows a disconnection between the space of Madrid and the women, who do not seem to actually take part in the life of the city.

Ballesteros refers to Pilar Rodríguez's assertion that Taberna tries to deconstruct all hierarchies and authority by means of not entering the diegetic field of the action herself (2005: 10). In this way her intention would be to create an open, non-appropriated communal place. Nevertheless, Taberna does enter the field of the action continuously, albeit only once physically on screen. This is at the end, which is even more poignant, as is the final *coup de théâtre* that rounds the whole film up as her creation of her particular multicultural vision of Madrid.

There is nevertheless only one remarkable sequence that transmits the spatial conflict that migrants suffer in Madrid: although mostly the ideal multicultural city, Taberna shows that not everybody finds it that easy and unproblematic there. The Ecuadorians Paulina and Andrea introduce us to their weekly gathering in the popular El Retiro Park every Sunday. By crossing into a new space differentiated from the rest of the park by the tunnel they go through, we encounter the music, food and ludic activities that this community enjoys weekly and that, in their own words, help them to stay closer and to be organized for any problems that they may encounter in the future. The harmonious scene is shattered by the arrival of a police patrol. The way the police interfere with the community, taking away their drinks and other goods, as street-selling is illegal, is criticized by Taberna by the use of the shaky camera that adds tension and

instability to the scene; beside this, the much darker lighting makes the image blurry and chaotic, with music and screaming replacing the previously joyful faces and music.

One of the women addresses the camera, asking why the police stop their work: 'we are working honestly, maybe they want us to go and work as prostitutes, tell me, is that what they want? (My translation). Another woman says 'two days we work, they don't let us, we haven't got anything to feed our kids on' (my translation), then she addresses the authorities and says: 'I beg the authorities to please understand that we are migrants and we need to work' (my translation). In this way, Taberna makes explicit her rejection of a territorial classification of the space, showing how this apparently ideal cosmopolitan city is also subjected to control. This is one of the only examples where Taberna offers an account of dissensus, in the sense that she demonstrates the difficulties the migrants face when they feel neglected and persecuted by the state when trying to make a living with dignity. Given that this is the only reference to prostitution in the film, it is noteworthy that the woman says this as she is defending the view that migrant women who work as prostitutes maybe do so as a last resort because the economy does not give them an alternative. However, the next shot shows Madrid with Christmas lights and the extradiegetic sound of a Christmas carol: Holy Night, in Spanish, 'Noche de Paz' (literally 'Night of Peace'). This juxtaposition creates a sharp contrast between the tension in the park and the peace in the night street where order seems restored and business carries on as usual. The sequence at the park exemplifies what Rex affirms about how plural societies need to hold together by regulation and not by integration (2010: 234). As he puts it, 'Authority, power and regulation are of crucial significance in maintaining, controlling and co-ordinating the plural society' (2010: 234). Then, this scene is telling of how Taberna achieves the staging of dissensus as she offers the injustice the migrants suffer at the hands of the police in the public space of the city park, using authority and power to regulate the foreign reunions instead of helping towards their integration and favouring their encounters as something necessary and beneficial for them. As one of the women reminds us, they have no jobs or any help from the state so they need to make a living, and these Sunday gatherings provide them with an opportunity to earn some money by selling soft drinks and food.

In a similar style, but this time lacking any disruption or tension, Taberna also takes us to visit the weekly gatherings of the Eastern European communities in Madrid. As Taberna did with the Latin American community in the park, she also approaches the spaces where the Polish and Ukrainian migrants get together through a member of that community. This may help the audience to align with her and be invited to observe without intruding. In this way, we witness how also on Sundays the Ukrainian and Polish communities of Madrid get together to find newspapers, magazines, send and receive parcels, look for job ads and find social networks. They smile continuously and, despite being apart from their beloved relatives, they manage to keep a positive attitude towards the camera. On this occasion there is no tension, as there was in the park with the Ecuadorians and the police.

According to Pilar Rodríguez (2003), Taberna's documentary entails an innovative way to represent female migration. The first one is by omitting what Nichols (1991: 222) denominated the 'arrival scene'. For Nichols, 'ethnographic film offers an impression of authenticity by means of the arrival scene, this represents an ironic form of coming into the presence of the "Other" that certifies difference (the difference between the ethnographic visitor and his/her subject) and

makes unity impossible' (1991: 221). Nichols suggests that unity as equality is impossible through the intervention of the visual mediator between the characters or settings and the viewer, since this mediator may come as a subject of difference as well as of superiority in the power relation established through the introduction. The mediator who arrives and speaks first sets the tone for what is to come afterwards and necessarily affects how the viewer receives the images. Rodríguez explains how Taberna disregards all personal entry or comments in voiceover by eliding the arrival scene so she avoids stepping 'onto the scenes and allows for an invisibility of a possible authoritarian and subjective voice behind the lens' (Rodríguez, 2003). Similarly, for Mary Anne Doane, the voiceover 'bypasses the characters and establishes a complicity between itself and the spectator who together come to understand and place the image' (1980: 168). Nevertheless, Taberna has from the beginning, and even before the images come on the screen, already made her personal entry by choosing the title, *Female Foreigners*, which foregrounds the otherness of the women. According to the Oxford Dictionary, a foreigner is 'a person not belonging to a particular place or group; a stranger or outsider.' On the one hand, this title works to associate the characters with otherness, but, on the other, Taberna also transforms to a certain extent the idea of otherness into a less stereotypical representation, as the images of a mosaic of female faces, like myriad photos put together but in separated compartments, reveal their contrasted difference. This offers the promise of a colourful, visual, cultural festival of racial diversity. This apparently positive representation is, when we look closer, also a reminder of the society that Waeterschoot describes as 'a mosaic-constructed society whose pieces are isolated and are not placed at the same level' (2012: 228, my translation).

With white migrants there is often natural light coming from windows or outdoor settings, whereas all African women are always screened indoors with walls and no windows in the background. We can speculate about the possible reasons behind this: one could be the intention of Taberna to show a variety of settings, but another more likely one, could be to imply the level of seclusion that black women suffer in comparison to lighter skinned migrants. Whatever the reasons, the effect all this creates is a reductionist analysis of how these women are living their lives in the host country, making it difficult to understand how they are really interacting in the public sphere. The relationship that these women seem to have with other female nationals also seems problematic. For example, as far as professional relationships are concerned, we have the example of the domestic worker Lala, who says that on Mondays the little boy she is looking after is quite difficult because his mother spoils him during the weekend. Similarly, the Sudanese Fanta resents Spanish female neighbours not even trying to come into her hairdressing salon because they are probably scared of having something strange done to their hair. But the scene is introduced by a close-up of a bright pink bottle of exotic shampoo with English words that places this hairdressing salon as a very different establishment where products are extremely different to the ones that can be found in a Spanish hairdresser salon, which implies that Spanish women may have a point in being suspicious.

Judith Butler refers to Gloria Anzaldúa's request (in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera)* to:

> Stay at the edge of what we know, to put our own epistemological certainties into question, and through that risk and openness to another way of knowing and of living in the world to expand our capacity to imagine the human (2004: 228).

Taberna attempts to briefly take us to some degree of contestation but does not always achieve this. One example is the scene chosen to introduce the educated Romanian migrant, Ileana Bucurenciu, who refers to the hybridisation inside her country, labelling Romanian gypsies as not 'Romanian Romanian', implying that they are not 'pure' Romanian but somehow a type of Romanian of a different quality. Ileana refers to the need of not eluding the responsibility that pure Romanians have with regard to this non-pure group, and gives the well known and counterproductive argument that 'some of them are more civilized that those properly called Romanian', an argument that does not account for the fact that it does not matter if some are more civilised than others, as this is not what must be argued, which is instead that they have the same rights and that they are equals independently of whether they are more or less 'civilised' than nationals. Bucurenciu assumes her privileged and superior position when she feels responsible for the 'non-pure' Romanian gypsies. Ileana's discourse does not challenge racism, as viewers are not provided with the opportunity to hear any Romanian or Spanish gypsies explaining their own point of view about this.

Furthermore, we only observe how one of the Roma migrants sings in the street asking for money with a little girl behind her looking straight into the lens of the camera. There is even the sign in the eyes of the woman looking down as she receives some money, we can assume, from a member of the filming team. Indeed these two characters, adult and child gypsies, are the only ones who look straight into the lens of the camera. The grave and intense look of the little girl especially disturbs the viewer but does not go any further in showing more of their lives and experiences. Taberna aligns herself with Ileana's perspective on Spanish gypsies when she shows footage of the shanty villages in the outskirts of Madrid, crowded with gypsy children behind a wired fence looking at the camera (in a driving car) in silence while some non-diegetic music adds to the dramatic effect of the scene. This helps viewers to make connections to their own hybridisation inside Spanish culture, since Spanish gypsies have also been part of Spanish culture for centuries, with an immense history of persecution and marginalisation that still exists very much nowadays. *Extranjeras*, therefore, universalises the Roma community, from Romania and from within Spain, and does not give them their place in this film. Instead they are portrayed as voiceless, which reinforces their invisibility, their lack of political agency and even more their stigmatisation, as they are accused by the teenage Polish girl, Kamilla, of beating her in school 'just for being Polish'. However, Kamilla manages to show a remarkable positivity when she adds that it could have been worse, that now she is in a new school, and that she feels that she belongs: 'me siento como una más' ('I feel like one of them', my translation).

Treacher affirms that '[c]olonised subjects are precisely that – subjects, subject to the desires and needs of others, and at the sharp end of profoundly ambivalent, if not mad-making statements – "you are not like us, you are to become like us"' (Treacher, 2005: 44). The scene therefore does not celebrate difference. On the contrary, it disguises it to ease the viewer and elide any social and personal responsibilities. Moreover, it implies that only through the loss of their own identity can migrants have a chance to feel integrated and accepted in the host community.

This happy ending transmits the idea that migrant children may at first feel excluded and even physically attacked, but all this racism and bullying disappears once the child learns the language and becomes more similar to the other Spanish children. The message it conveys comes to be

that obliterating difference is the way to happiness in the new country, that losing your identity to adapt to the culture of the majority will make your life easier. With examples like this, the multiculturalism that this documentary promotes celebrates difference as it can be experienced indoors or at the level of the private domain, but does not counteract the process that seeks to obliterate difference in the public sphere under the pretext that by becoming more Spanish in the public sphere, adaptation and integration is possible and desirable. This is not equality without conditions, as Rancière proclaims, because this is a message of how migrant homogenisation is desirable in order to be accepted. The problem is that this acceptance comes with conditions, and those conditions come given and imposed by the majority. Thus, this leaves the minorities without the possibility of being truly and completely accepted for what they really are. This idea equates with consensus in the sense that the shrinking of the migrants' differences can be equated with the shrinking of political space. The fact that this discourse favours the invisibility or the blurring of difference in the public sphere also accounts for the invisibility of the migrants' cultural and political identities. Consequently this also has an impact on their political agency, since they are requested to become something different from what they are in order to adjust to the norms and expectations of the host country.

Taberna reinforces her superior position as creator of the film by appearing at the end, where all of the interviewees have met to attend the Africans' performance. The pessimistic view of the documentaries from Guerín and Ramsis, with the destruction of the multicultural space through the construction of the new uniform buildings in the former, and the struggle to create their own space in the latter, contrasts with Taberna's optimism in the creation of the imagined space, where women from different cultures share their experiences in a rather jolly and hopeful way and with a rather constructed solidary final embrace.

The circular structure of *Extranjeras* also facilitates the achievement of proximity between viewers and characters. The beginning of the film shows close shots of the foreign women, and at the very end the documentary ends with the women's faces again, but now we see their names and country of origin imprinted underneath. This circular structure reinforces Taberna's intention of giving the audience the feeling that they know these women better after listening to their voices, and thus are able to better understand their lives and relate to them. Costa-Villaverde asserts:

> From their initial total foreignness, these women come to achieve an intense human proximity to the spectator and are given an individual identity. The soundtrack helps the expression and transmission of a humanising message (2007: 88).

Nonetheless, even though there is an obvious degree of proximity to some of the characters, there is also a degree of distancing from others by means of not only exoticising women's bodies and cultural traditions in some cases, but also by means of manipulating meaningful settings and ideological conceptions. Some of the women appear to be suspicious of nationals and often mention how they want to mix with other members of their ethnic group, since they feel more comfortable and safe in this way. A more truthful and positive depiction of these women would have to take into consideration an interesting remark from Spivak who states that 'in order to learn enough about Third World women and to develop a different readership, the immense

heterogeneity of the field must be appreciated, and the First World woman must learn to stop feeling privileged *as a woman'* (quoted in Young, 2003: 110, italics in original). Taberna addresses this privileged position to a certain extent. As already mentioned, she shows a Latin American and an Iraqi woman questioning whether Spanish women should believe they have done enough for gender equality as they are still victims of sexual discrimination at work and at home. However, although this request to continue fighting for women's rights in Spain points to a political issue that effectively works to enact female awareness and invites us to reflect on women's position in Spanish society, this still places the Spanish woman in a superior position, because the Latin American and the Iraqi women are taking their viewpoints from the acknowledgement that Spanish women are in fact more advanced in this gender battle than women in their home countries. This becomes then a discourse that places Spanish women in a superior position with regard to other nationalities. Alternatively, Taberna could have placed herself and the rest of the Spanish women in a more equal position without foregrounding any privileged position. The migrant women do not seem to be enlightening Taberna or the female national audiences as women, as she keeps her superior position throughout the film at the centre of everything. If a woman does not consider another woman an equal and she believes she is more privileged or in a more advanced position, she most probably will not take the other woman's advice, and instead she will consider herself responsible for helping and liberating her, taking as a point of reference her own Western ideals and imposing them onto her.

9.4 Conclusion

It should not be the case that the main reason to accept migrants in one country would be how pleasant and civilized they are and how well they are going to behave, always conforming (or at least trying to conform) to Spanish values and norms. Taberna seeks to reassure the national viewer of how these women do not pose a threat to these Spanish values and norms, but this prevents this representation becoming political, as it centres itself on the humanising character of the migrants and not their rights and agency as females of minority groups, who can be doubly oppressed, by males and by national females. Therefore, this depiction of female difference diverts attention from the conditions of oppression that women, national and migrant, still share in neoliberal societies.

As Rancière points out, democratic politics does not involve what people are given or what they can expect but what they do as a group 'under the presupposition of their equality within a police order that does not recognize that equality' (Cited in May 2010: 79). In *Extranjeras* there is a lack of 'doing' in Rancière's political sense, as it is more about what image of an idyllic Madrid Taberna wants to portray as a means to include the female migrants and make them more familiar to Spanish audiences. This comes as a portrayal of a space that is devoid of political meaning, where most women are already enjoying a good degree of acceptance and social comfort, and so any call for radical politics becomes unnecessary, as everything seems to be working just fine.

Extranjeras tries to help audiences to connect with the migrants, to understand that multi-culturality is enriching, that we all can learn from each other, and that migrants in Spain do not belong to a stereotypical uniform group of the poor, the illegal and prostitutes. Instead, Taberna

seeks to show an appealing and desirable mix of women from many different cultures, with their music, language, food and religious traditions as the main focus of interest for the viewer, because, as Ballesteros argues,'[t]he ethnological documentary format, usually considered a first stage in the articulation of the social and political agendas of oppressed segments of the society, proves to be a very useful instrument to render visibility to these women' (2005: 10). This visibility, however, is blurred by the intrusion of the camera, which ends up typifying women's representations, especially in the case of the women coming from cultures that are further away from the Spanish one as is the case of the Arab, Bangladeshi and African women, thus relegating them to a vulnerable position and consequently disempowering them.

Taberna intends to express an attitude of understanding, of coming together and celebrating womanhood and difference, but her camera dominates and subordinates the women to a certain extent, therefore reducing the capacity of the documentary to achieve what she has probably set herself to do, that is, to empower the female migrants and give them a voice. But while the other three documentaries already analysed offer a contested vision of the urban city, where migrants openly expose the struggles they face in the capitalist system that has engulfed them, but which they try to fight anyway, *Extranjeras* keeps its attention on demonstrating how the foreign women do not pose a threat to the Spanish national order, as they are mothers with religious traditions that can be equated with Spanish values as well as moral values. Moreover, their affiliation to modernity is expressed by talking about how Spanish women need to keep fighting for gender equality, as everything has not been done yet. Thus, these women are portrayed as being different on the outside (or in those superficial aspects that do not really matter, as they are private affairs) but essentially similar in mentality (or in those aspects that really make an impact in society).

Taberna situates the Spanish woman as a homogenised and normative group coming towards the centre of the film's discourse, even though they are not shown visually on screen. To a certain extent, Taberna foregrounds the foreign woman as the 'other', in some cases in need of changes and of being liberated, and all thanks to the Western woman that Taberna comes to represent. This is especially exemplified by the final scene where Taberna poses at the centre of the frame surrounded by some of the migrants who have previously appeared in the film, but it is also expressed with the speeches of the younger women, who appear to aspire to be 'Spanish' and to look 'Spanish' in their desire to feel like they belong and that they are 'one of the group'.

Taberna sometimes presents foreign and national women's inequality in terms of the migrants' successful progress towards an ideal of Western womanhood, rather than hearing them on their own terms. This vision of multiculturalism de-politicises the migrants' differences, as their foods, religions and languages are part of their private lives and do not interfere at any level with the public. As this multicultural model that Taberna proclaims does not pose any problems in the public or the private sphere, there is no need to make any changes. As this model seems to work well and does not present problems, it does not need to be discussed any further, which is to say that dissensus (or political equality) does not need to be the goal when consensus (or the depoliticisation of difference) is doing the job well, as the migrants seem content with their lives and Madrid mainly shows its kindest face for them, especially if they are nice and civilised.

In other words, and as already mentioned in the introduction to this analysis, as cultural difference is reduced to the private sphere, there is no conflict of public interest, and therefore no need to change the status quo. The minority groups embodied by the female migrants in this film do not appear as hierarchically subordinated to the mainstream national group, or to the patriarchal authority of their male partners, and so consensus will prevail, as there is no need for conflict, and there is no reference to the hegemony of a dominant majority group. Where there is no conflict there is consensus, and therefore no need to talk about dissensus.

PART 2: THE FICTION FILMS

10. Introduction

The analysis of the documentaries has shown how the use of accented cinema elements, self-advocacy, movement, disagreement and fluidity, filmmakers can stage scenes of dissensus, thus creating a perspective of migration from the migrant's point of view, while exposing the ways dominant group norms work to create consensual hierarchies of power, thereby thwarting traditional ways of representing the migrant 'other'. *En Construccion* and *Si nos dejan* offer a vision of Barcelona with the eyes of the 'other', not the Barcelona model city of the tourist postcards but the other Barcelona, the one where people fight every day to make a living. This less pleasant view of the city allows for the individuals to be visible and have a voice that tells the world what it is like to be on the other side, on the side of the excluded. On the other hand, Madrid is also a very different city from the one it used to be twenty years ago due to the arrival of migrants from all over the world. While Ramsis' *El otro lado* shows Madrid with the eyes of the other, revealing the conflictual factors among the different communities living in Lavapiés, Taberna's *Extranjeras* offers a vision of multiculturalism that is closer to the liberal pluralist ideals that relay an image of female migration as corresponding to the norms of the dominant classes. The elements that worked better for the staging of dissensus in all four documentaries have been accented cinema characteristics and making audible and visible those who do not normally count as visible or hearable, and letting them speak and represent themselves on their own terms.

The following section explores the cinematic representation of migrants in four fiction films. The analysis will take into account issues regarding genre, as the 'migration' fiction films under consideration make use of certain conventions traditionally associated with genres such as drama, melodrama and the road movie. By doing so, it is possible to identify and explore the elements that better contribute to the creation of scenes of dissensus in these films in ways that the documentary films examined above do not. Taking into account Barry Keith Grant's assertion that 'genre movies are those commercial feature films which, through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations' (2007: 1), we can establish a link between film genre and migration, as Langford also does when she explores how genre and 'the transgeneric can highlight and be highlighted by issues fundamental to migration' (2013: 91).

Although it can be argued that both documentary and fiction films are similar in the sense that neither are simple reflections of the real world, and that they both offer a reflection of reality that is manipulated to a greater or smaller extent, it is also fair to point out that, as Bottomore explains, the main difference between the documentary and fiction film is that 'the material being manipulated is images of the real world, rather than images of a fictional world' (2001: 116). In this sense,

> Audiences are usually made aware of which genre they are seeing, and because of its'realer' pedigree they come to non-fiction ('manipulated real images' we might also say) with a different set of assumptions, expectations and hopes than they would bring to

> images of fiction. Assumptions that these images do not show actors; expectations that they show real, unstaged events; and hopes that they give a true sense of what was originally happening (2001: 116).

Therefore, if we accept the viewpoint that audiences come with a different mindset depending on the type of film they are going to see, then it is possible to link how these different expectations, assumptions and hopes influence the way migrants are represented in film, thus having a different impact on their dissensual or consensual representation. In this way we can compare how different narratives and formal techniques in both documentary and fiction forms represent otherness and contribute to the creation of scenes of dissensus. As Santaolalla notes, in most immigration films the figure of the migrant is treated with sympathy and benevolence, in most cases as a victim or with a very limited restricted field of action due to Spanish laws or the prejudices of mainstream Spanish society (2005: 258). Similarly, according to Ballesteros, 'Spanish filmic representations of immigration include a panoply of reflections on the foreign and racial body's visibility and on the locals' reaction to the progressive miscegenation of Spanish society' (2007: 170). On the other hand, for Amy Oliver, Spanish fiction films whose representations focus on the documentation of economic immigration between 1990 and 2011 expose 'the construction and transformation of migrant acceptance as well as accentuate xenophobic hierarchization' (2011).

The four fiction films analysed in this section reveal how filmmakers create different representations of immigration. To begin with, *Flores de otro mundo* (1999) offers the opportunity of exploring female migration from the perspective of a female Spanish director, as happened with *Extranjeras*, but this time in fictional mode. The second fiction film analysed is *Agua con sal* (2005), a Spanish-Puerto Rican coproduction, scripted by a Cuban female and directed by a Spanish male national. It tells the story of a Cuban female migrant while drawing on ideas of globalisation and ethics. The next film analysed in this section is *Retorno a Hansala* (2008), also directed by a Spanish female filmmaker, which is of great interest, as it is the first film whose story goes back to the place of origin, a rural village in Morocco, where the main Spanish male character travels to discover himself with the help of the female migrant character. And finally, *Biutiful* (2010), a Spanish-Mexican co-production, provides an exploration of the city of Barcelona throught the eyes of a Mexican director. This city, already represented by Guerín and Torres in documentary form, becomes the space of marginal figures and outcasts. Director Iñarritu creates a city that belongs to the others, not only to the migrants from outside Spain, but also to all those locals who live in precarious conditions and who are purposefully excluded from the traditional representations of Barcelona. This is a film that can be defined as a post-migration film, where the focus is not anymore on how nationals receive and behave towards migrants, but on how both marginal locals and migrants become one and the same, the new precariat, struggling to survive against the difficulties imposed on them by the post-crash neoliberal system.

I will demonstrate how both films directed by Spanish female directors, *Retorno a Hansala* and *Flores de otro mundo,* tend towards consensus in the sense that they favour the idea of the migrant characters as conforming to the status quo that the nationals impose on them. In both of these films, there is a central romantic relationship with a happy ending between the main male

national and the female migrant aimed at promoting the possibility of interculturality in Spain, but on the national characters' terms. On the other hand, the other two films, which are both Spanish and Latin American/Caribbean co-productions, *Agua con sal* and especially *Biutiful,* pose a more critical representation of Spain that, although showing the strength and resilience of the human condition, also imagines a darker and more pessimistic future for the characters.

It is also necessary to point out how the generic conventions used in the films affect the narrative and the representation of the migrant characters, this being the most significant difference between the representation of migrants in documentary and in fiction form. Generic conventions predominantly employ conventional unities of time and place, and this is the case with *Flores de otro mundo*, *Agua con sal* and *Retorno a Hansala*, where the natural order of things or the status quo is re-stated to a greater extent thanks to the use of these conventions. *Agua con sal* and *Retorno a Hansala,* for example, place ethics at the heart of the relationship between migrants and locals so as to imagine the best possible way to create a mutual understanding. In contrast, the films, *Agua con sal* and *Biutiful*, present the subject of exile and expose the illnesses of globalisation and capitalism, but the latter film, unlike the other three films in this section, presents more unconventional structures of place and time together with aesthetic and formal elements that help transform fixed boundaries, as well as refusing the narrative closure that the other three films offer. Iñarritu thus creates in this sense a more dissensual representation of identities and their space, which also contributes to a disruption of conventional identity-forming, space-forming and social practices.

11. Female Migrant Identities, Rural Space and Consensus *in Flores de otro mundo* (Iciar Bollaín, 1999)

11.1 Introduction

I will analyse how Iciar Bollaín's *Flores de otro Mundo* uses melodramatic techniques in an attempt to offer a vision of the migratory experience through the eyes of the Caribbean female migrants in a rural village of Spain. Bollaín chooses the rural Castilian landscape in order to play with the problematic of possible transplantation with a visual and ideological contrast between the female Caribbean migrants, the Spanish rural characters and the space they struggle to share. For Ballesteros, the rural family becomes in this film 'the locus of hope for a multiethnic and tolerant society' (2005: 7). Nevertheless, this rural context also proves a challenge at various levels when considering how the village and its inhabitants are, or can be, transformed with the arrival of the female migrants. Most films representing migrants so far had been set in big cities like Madrid and Barcelona, which makes this film an innovative way to portray migrants in Spain, and more particularly in this case, female migrants. Thus the analysis of this film is especially relevant because, as Doreen Massey points out:

> This persistent focus on cities as the sites which most provoke disturbance in us is perhaps part of what has tamed (indeed is dependent upon the taming of) our vision of the rural. Yet reimagining countryside/Nature is more challenging still than responding to the changing spatiality (customarily figured as predominantly human) of the urban (2005: 160).

Thus, by choosing the rural as the site to reimagine the migrant and national encounter, Bollaín challenges the response to the conflicts and tensions arising in the film, since, traditionally, this rural environment is where Spanish social, religious and political traditions and national identities are most strongly rooted in the past. Although Bollaín is able, to a certain extent, to create changes and disruption in the spatial configurations of the village, the end of the film reveals how these traditions remain not only intact, but also how they are reinforced thanks to the incorporation of Patricia and her children into this Spanish rural regime.

The contrasting effects of these 'exotic' and young (fertile) foreign women represent when placed against the aridity (sterile) rural settings are highlighted and reinforced in order to bring to the fore questions about the creation and disruption of communities, gender, and the fear of the foreign 'Other'. In this attempt, Bollaín partly achieves a focalisation from the perspective of the migrant female characters, but fails to completely disrupt traditional ways of representing Caribbean women in Spanish cinema. Besides, the film strongly reinforces the stereotypes traditionally associated with the black male migrant as an outlaw, sexualised, dangerous, and an irresponsible father. This portrayal presents a significant contrast between Caribbean and Spanish masculinity, where the noble and hard-working rural man embodies all that is traditionally associated with good family and masculine values.

Although the film is set up to create a space which can be positively affected by the changes that the new foreign women can bring to the village, the structure of the film and its narrative logic wipe out these possible changes and reassert the status quo of the patriarchal order so characteristic of the Spanish society, and even more so of the Spanish rural environment. The tensions brought into the village by the foreign women are dissolved thanks to either the narrative death of the women or their submission to the patriarchal structure of power finishing with a comforting and reassuring end. This is the same pattern which E.A. Kaplan has observed in relation to the representation of trauma in melodrama (2001). For Kaplan, 'in melodrama, the spectator is introduced to trauma through a film's themes and techniques', 'but the film ends with a comforting closure or "cure". Such mainstream works posit trauma (against its reality) as a discrete past event, locatable, representable and curable' (2001: 204). This 'cure' also takes place in *Flores de otro mundo,* as all the traumatic experiences that the arrival of the foreign women causes are finally resolved with a seemingly happy ending. The film explores how the characters negotiate their relations and positions and tries to show the difficulties and the possibilities of a successful dialogue. Although Bollaín allows to a certain extent the new bodies to establish a connection with the new space, the final outcome comes to define this spatial connection as subjected to the locals' terms.

I will follow Doreen Massey's concept of 'sense of place' and Henri Lefebvre's conceptual triad relating to the 'social production of space' to describe how *Flores de otro mundo* removes the national viewer from his/her proximity to the locals and in this way aligns the viewer with the migrants' point of view. However, although the representation of the space sometimes empowers the female migrants, I will argue that, at other times, it also disempowers them, providing to a certain extent a political enactment of the patriarchal order in the rural community depicted in the film. Lefebvre's ideas will be useful in the analysis of the rural space because, as Halfacree states, Lefebvre 'may have moved from the rural to the urban in his own life and work but his ideas can still be used to re-interrogate the former' (2007).

Closely related to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau's theories of spatial practices will also help with the analysis of the ways the film constructs the cinematic space, because, as B. R. Jackobson affirms, de Certeau never refers directly to cinema, but to 'the concepts which emerge from his discussions of "ways of operating," practices of appropriating space, and the "problematics of enunciation" provide salient insight for film analysis on multiple levels' (2002: 16). De Certeau's descriptions of 'tactics' and 'strategies' are most useful in this analysis because they can inform the ways the characters make use of the space in an attempt to comply with or challenge the patriarchal order of the rural village.

In the case of *Flores* there are important contradictions when attempting to subvert dominant social spatial relations and points of view. Bollaín follows the traditions of narrative continuity, encouraging viewers to search for cause-and-effect connections, limiting the possible disruptions of the sensible order of things. In this way, Bollaín's film confirms Annette Kuhn's statement, based on Pam Cook's work, that 'in a patriarchal society female desire and female point-of-view are highly contradictory, even if they have the potential to subvert culturally dominant modes of spectator-text relations' (2000: 439).

With regard to this, Rancière's conception of cinema is most relevant and useful to explore how this film organizes space and reveals the way structures of power can be challenged or, on the contrary, reinforced. Rancière sees cinema as a mode 'that abolishes the opposition of an inner world and an outer world, a world of spirit and a world of bodies, that abolishes the oppositions of subject and object, of scientifically known nature and experienced emotion' (Cited in Garneau and Cisneros, 2004: 115). This conception of cinema confers on the medium unlimited power for subversion. Rancière does not present a theory of cinema, 'but a way of reading whose keyword is contradiction' (Garaneau and Cisneros, 2004: 108). For Rancière there are two regimes of visibility, the representational and the aesthetic or expressive, which are non-adjusted, two contradictory aspects of the self-same image from which the interpretation must nevertheless come. As an example of these two poetic powers intertwined within the work, we have expression against form and content, or the visual instance against the signifying instance (Garneau and Cisneros, 2004: 111). These two poetics, the representational logic and the aesthetic logic (also related to consensus and dissensus respectively) are tied to different regimes of emotion and it is when the logic of coding in the representational regime explodes, thanks to the unfulfilled expectation produced by the aesthetic regime, that the standards of emotion give way to myriad novel emotions. In other words: 'apathos of thought, we might say, that distresses (Lyotard), bewitches (Chateau), or astonishes (Schéfer) – a sensible mode of thought' (Garneau and Cisneros, 2004: 123).

For Rancière, it is only when these two regimes are considered conjointly that we can 'grasp the conflict — now latent, now exploding with violence — that gives the cinema its force' and 'this force of contradiction derives from the contrast between the closure of meaning and the openness to the visible' (Garneau and Cisneros 2004: 110). It plays itself out within a single image, and not, as with Deleuze, between one image and another. As Garneau and Cisneros (2004: 111-112) point out, Rancière stresses in *Le Partage du sensible* (2000) that:

> This poetics holds an imitative relation to society, meaning that the representational logic establishes a globally analogous relation to an integrated hierarchy of political and social occupations. It corresponds to a distribution of roles, situations, and forms of social behavior or consensus.

This analysis takes as a point of departure *Flores* as a film that presents melodramatic aspects that can be analysed in conjunction with the spatial elements in order to reflect on how the film reinforces or challenges hegemonic structures of power. In other words, this section will focus on how 'tactics' and 'strategies' work in the film, alongside the melodramatic elements, towards either consensus or dissensus. Thus, taking Rancière's ideas into consideration, I will argue that the representational logic that Bollaín establishes in this film performs to a greater extent the distribution of the sensible and the enactment of the 'natural order of things' leading to 'consensus', whereas the film's aesthetics confer at times more visibility and disruption to that order, creating contradiction and ambiguity in the representation of the female migrants and their integration in the space of the rural village. This argument, translated into de Certeau's terminology, would involve the analysis of the way the female migrants make use of 'tactics' to appropriate their space against 'strategies' of power imposed over them, and how the film's structure and narrative ultimately favour the latter over the former.

Rancière's theories applied to this film will be relevant because, as Anna Siomopoulos argues, 'political theory can help feminist cultural studies clarify the social effects and the political stakes of contemporary media culture for an archive of the future' (2006: 179). Siomopoulos refers to Hannah Arendt and her useful argument about the political inefficacy of compassion in melodrama, 'a genre whose rhetoric of emotion momentarily collapses the difference between sufferer and spectator, other and self, and thus makes political dialogue seem unnecessary' (2006: 181). Siomopoulos states that in Hollywood melodrama, a narration of multiple identification often suggests that inequalities of race, gender, class and sexuality are simultaneously everyone's fault and no one's fault, and that the solution to social injustice does not require structural political and economic changes, but simply a little more empathy on behalf of all the parties concerned (2006: 181). She concludes in her article how a 'politically theorized study of cinema can help us determine how both Hollywood and state institutions interact to construct the film spectator, and what social, cultural, and political changes are needed to materialize the unrealized ideals of feminism and radical democracy' (2006: 182). Bearing all these ideas in mind, I will look for the connection between melodramatic elements and spatial elements and how they work towards dissensus or consensus, in other words, how they contribute to subverting or reinforcing the status quo, since complying with the space or challenging it is key to melodrama.

11.2 *Flores de otro mundo* as a Melodrama

The film under consideration makes extensive use of melodramatic elements in an attempt to disclose the tensions and negotiations between different individuals in a small village in the middle of Spain. In this representation, the social order and the individual's virtue are re-established despite or thanks to the tensions and conflicts that the arrival of outsiders has created in the previously peaceful and isolated traditional village. As Hayward recounts, 'melodrama serves to make sense of the family and in so doing perpetuates it, including the continuation of the subordination of the woman' (1996: 203). Additionally, Brooks understands the melodramatic mode in two senses: first, 'as the urge to make sense of a collapsed moral order and, second, as the model of reality that emerges from such an effort' (Zarzosa, 2010: 337). Brooks defines melodrama as 'a kind of drama that strives to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, to "prove" the existence of a moral universe which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgment, does exist and can be made to assert its presence and its categorical force among men' (Zarzosa, 2010: 240).

In more detail, *Flores* brings to the fore the domestic and the private sphere of family construction, cultural difference and female migration as the three main sites of conflict and negotiation. The film also portrays some of the diverse reasons why women migrate, as well as how different are the relationships they establish with the other female and male characters. The experiences they encounter have basically to do with the sphere of the private, with their romantic relationships and with their struggles to adapt physically and especially emotionally with the new space. However, and more importantly, the film also moves into the political sphere by, to a lesser extent, exposing the difficulties that these women have suffered and continue to face in the country.

Furthermore, and following Zarzosa's arguments, this film reveals how the female migrant characters search for love, romance or family stability through acts of exchange with the male nationals. Agustín Zarzosa (2010) offers a description of melodrama as a mode of exchange. He uses Elsaesser (1972) and Brooks (1976) as uncontested premises of what film melodrama is. According to Zarzosa, 'the prevailing understanding of the melodramatic mode distinguishes between melodrama as a social sensibility and as an artistic representation' (2010: 396) He argues that the former is 'characterized by anxiety, moral confusion and the dissolution of hierarchy' and the latter is 'characterized by plot twists, visual metaphors and strong emotions' (2010: 396). Zarzosa continues to describe how both elements 'derive from a more fundamental aspect of melodrama constituted by acts of exchange' (Ibid). Melodrama for Zarzosa dramatizes 'the consequences of putting into circulation objects and ideas that should not be assigned an exchange value' (2010: 396). For Zarzosa, 'The melodramatic imagination is concerned with practices of exchange because these create, sustain and overturn ideologies' (2010: 398). Zarzosa concludes 'that melodrama has an affinity with the private' but does not privilege the domestic over the public sphere because, according to him, 'in melodrama, the private refers not to the domestic sphere, but to a system of exchange unrecognized in the public sphere' (2010: 410). As Van Liew argues, in this film 'romance plays a pivotal role in representing a shifting national landscape' (2010: 2). I will argue that this film as a melodrama portrays and condemns the exchange of values these women perform at the same time as it tries to vaguely celebrate the possibility of intercultural merging between nationals and migrants, although always within the boundaries of traditional Spanish family values. For Brooks, melodrama realises that ordinary life will, if properly considered, live up to the expectations of the moral imagination, 'that the ordinary and humble and quotidian will reveal itself full of excitement, suspense and peripety, conferred by the play of cosmic moral relations and forces' (1995: 54). In *Flores* the primarily domestic and familiar human relationships between migrants and locals are elevated to a higher degree of excitement through a dramatisation that follows the narrative structure of a presentation of events, followed by tensions and negotiations with a final resolution, but always following the moral imagination.

Bearing these ideas in mind, *Flores* follows the melodramatic mode and dramatises the tensions in the encounters, not only between the foreign and the national but also between the rural and the urban. Moreover, it exemplifies the effects of the exodus from the villages to the cities and draws from reality to dramatise how the villagers use the bachelors' parties as an attempt to keep the village alive and economically viable. This melodrama is also more innovative in Spanish cinema, as the main female characters are foreign women representing migrants in Spain, which provides a useful opportunity to explore the use of space and political agency in a melodrama about female migration. For Susan Hayward, 'in the female melodramas, also known as weepies or tearjerkers, the central character is female and what is privileged is a female perspective. We are in the world of emotions not actions' (1996: 209). Therefore, the contestation of the space, the gender tensions and the racial issues become paramount in the analysis because, as we will see, the film portrays different women negotiating their roles and positions in the new space. Nevertheless, it will eventually become clear that those women who fail to accommodate the village rules will leave and/or disappear. This idea takes us to Susan Hayward's statement that if a woman cannot assume or resume her role as reproducer and nurturer, then 'she must stand aside, disappear, not be' (1996: 210).

11.3 Plot Influences and Contextualization of *Flores de otro mundo*

Flores is a Spanish film written and directed by Iciar Bollaín in 1999. This film's plot is inspired by the real 'women convoy' organised by the bachelors in the Aragón village of San Juan de Plan (Huesca) in 1985. These men in Aragón were also inspired by the western film *Westward the Women* (Wellman, 1951), where a man who owns a valley in California organizes a wagon trip west with women from Chicago who want to move there and get married. The theatrical trailer for this movie presents intertitles that read 'the strangest drama that ever came out of the West' followed by 'a caravan of women braving the wilderness to a rendezvous with men who hungered for love' and finally, 'never underestimate the will of a woman when there is a wedding ring in sight' (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4uey4-H6wU). *Flores,* then, feeds from this melodramatic plot, as the Spanish bachelors organised the parties having taken the idea from Wellman's film.

In 1995, Manuel (a Spanish man) and Venezia (a Dominican woman) met at one of these parties and decided to set up a company called Asocamu (Asociación de caravanas de mujeres/ Women Convoys Association). They now continue to organize these parties, bussing women from different places in Spain to villages with the aim of promoting rural re-population. As their webpage informs (www.caravanasdemujeres.com), women pay between 15 and 30 € and men double that amount. When the women arrive, the men receive them with a red flower, either a carnation or a rose. When a man is interested in a woman, he will give her the flower and then after spending some time together, she will decide whether she is also interested or not. They have lunch followed by dancing and later on dinner also followed by more dancing. The trips normally last one day or two and the respective city councils also may contribute towards the expenses. The webpage offers information about the origin of these parties and also refers to *Flores de otro mundo* as 'a beautiful, sentimental and realistic film […] that is practically a cinematographic copy of how these parties between single men and women take place in real life by ASOCAMU' (www.caravanademujeres.com). In this way we can see how fiction and reality intertwine, as well as their capacity to influence one another, since ASOCAMU presents the film as an example of what to expect at the meetings.

The film tells the story of Santa Eulalia, a small Castilian town that is in danger of extinction due to young people migrating to the cities. The name of the village also connotes the particularly strong religious tradition that is attached to this place, as this saint was only a twelve year old when she became a martyr, and a famous figure of protest, after being tortured and killed for rejecting Daciano's anti-Christian laws. In the film, the men of the town organise a celebration for prospective single women coming by bus from all across Spain. This bus is about half-filled with light-skinned Spanish women, while the other half consists of younger, darker-skinned women from The Dominican Republic.

According to Santaolalla, Bollaín submits 'Spanish viewers to a process of identification with Caribbean migrants and to a certain extent to alienation from their own Spanish surroundings through the way in which the Castilian inhabitants and landscape are viewed from a certain distance by the narrative' (2007: 73). All the characters in the film seem alienated while loss and

absence pervades the space. According to Parvati Nair, 'both the men and the women in this film are liminal characters, the former through the cultural impoverishment of their environment, the latter through the hurdles they must cross in order to procure a better life' (2002). Nair also points out that 'on paper, the women are Third World citizens and the men members of the First World as Spaniards, nevertheless, as peasants, the latter know that they are regarded as marginal in the context of a "new", modernized Spain' (2002). Thus, the traditional assumed idea of migrants coming to a modern Spain from less civilized societies is counteracted in this film by the fact that these foreign women come from cities like Santo Domingo and La Havana where modernity seems still more prominent that in the little village of Santa Eulalia.

Bollaín intends to distance the viewer from the national characters, and align them more closely with the foreign women. The viewer will gain an urban gaze so the village can appear more remote and its inhabitants more strange. At the same time, the foreign women will become more familiar, which in turn will favour spectatorial identification. Nevertheless, although Bollaín achieves to some degree equality between the migrant and local characters, she also creates a space that reinforces the differences between the Castilian and the Caribbean cultures and transforms those differences into a melodramatic spectacle: on the one hand, the arid, sterile Castilian landscape with mostly old villagers and, on the other, the young, exotic and fertile Caribbean women with multiple references to their warm skin and sexuality, as opposed to the cold and more sexually repressed Spanish women.

During the party, two men are successful and find a girlfriend: Alfonso, the party organizer, who is also a horticulturalist, starts a relationship with Marirrosi, a divorced nurse from Bilbao, and Damián, a local farmer who lives with his widowed mother (Gregoria), marries Patricia, a Dominican domestic worker. Apart from this, another couple emerges in the film, Carmelo, a successful builder, and Milady, a 20-year-old black Cuban woman whom Carmelo met in La Havana via sex tourism and brings to the village as his fiancée. Patricia brings her two children with her once she is married and struggles to be accepted by Gregoria. Patricia is still secretly married to Fran, a Dominican, father of her two children, Janay and Orlando. Fran arrives in the village harassing her for money and threatening to destroy the security she has found with Damián. Patricia and Milady become good friends and they only seem to have a friendship with each other. Only Patricia and Damián achieve stability in their union, whereas Marirrosi and Milady cannot adapt to this rural life and leave Santa Eulalia for good. At the end of the film in a circular structure, the process starts again when another bus full of women arrives in the village.

11.4 Gender, Rural Space and the Tension between Dissensus and Consensus

Spanish national cinema has predominantly been devoted to rural settings and themes (Faulkner, 2006; Gómez, 2011). For Agustín Gómez, Spanish cinema is primarily rural because Spanish culture is rural. Gómez refers to 'Don Quijote de la Mancha' (Cervantes, 1605 and 1615) as an example of how Spanish literature from its beginnings has mainly focused on the rural. Gómez bases his discourse on a description of common features appearing in rural cinema from a vast number of filmmakers, such as Carlos Saura, Luis Buñuel, Mario Camus, José Luis Borau, Victor Erice, Ricardo Franco and Pedro Almodóvar. The vision of the rural environment as a pastoral idyll complied with Franco's ideology, and therefore, as Faulkner states, 'influential dissident directors expressed their opposition to the regime through the depiction of a cruel, violent rural space' (2006: 35). There are thus both conservative and dissident traditions in Spanish ruralist cinema. As Faulkner distinguishes, 'the conservative tradition encourages a picturesque treatment of rural space, while the dissident tradition leads to a politicized portrait of the exploited peasantry' (2006: 35).

Bollaín's film continues with the traditional characteristics of Spanish rural cinema, for example, when family and neighbourhood tensions lead to violent episodes, for example, the scene in the bar when men fight or when Carmelo hits Milady. Moreover, the failure of the urban characters to adapt in the village as well as the inability of the rural characters to adapt to the city, such as when Marirrosi finds the village unbearable and Alfonso speaks of how impossible it would be for him to go back to the city. There are also in this film the commonly used scenes of peasant food being eaten around a table with a chequered tablecloth. Similarly, we also see the figure of the ruthless landlord (Carmelo) and his mentally retarded employee (Oscar), as also happens in Camus' film *Los Santos Inocentes* (1984), and the conventional lady in distress coming from a lower social class and being used by the landlord. In relation to this, we see how *Flores* incorporates these traditionally used conventions in Spanish rural cinema into her depiction of Santa Eulalia. Thus, the way Bollaín represents Santa Eulalia can be related to how the rural has been framed in Spanish cinema during and after the Francoist dictatorship, despite presenting certain contradictions.

According to Llamazares and Bollaín, the scriptwriters of *Flores*, this film conveys the clash of two cultures, the Castilian, arid and dry, and the Caribbean, hot and open. In Bollain's own words: 'This film is anti-natural. Like its theme, it puts with forceps women full of life and pure warmth in a world that is enclosed and going extinct' (2000: 47, my translation). They understand as anti-natural the combination of the warm Caribbean women in this cold Spanish soil and they exploit this difference as much as possible, giving the migrant women a stereotyped quality that helps them portray more effectively the contrast between the foreign women's tropical nature and the Spanish women and the village's sterile nature. Furthermore, the film also offers the clash between regional differences as Marirrosi comes from Bilbao, a big city in the Basque Country. This area is characterised by its strong sense of independence with regard to the rest of Spain, with many nationalist voices claiming and fighting for a separate state for many years. The Basque Country also has a different language and many differences with the identity of the rest of the Spanish nation. This territorial element is attached to Marirrosi's character, which makes her appear as more alien to this village than other Spanish characters from any other region of Spain would have seemed. This also equates her to an extent with the otherness

of the Caribbean women in this space, making them more equally outsiders, even though Marirrosi is not stereotyped as Basque or as Spanish, as she is characterised as being quite neutral as far as physical features, accent and clothing style are concerned.

Marirrosi and Milady both find Santa Eulalia hostile, ugly and 'dead'. In what I understand partly as an attempt at political allegory, both leave the village in their refusal to lose their independence and submit to the patriarchal system of which Alfonso and Carmelo are the main figures. However, Patricia's narrative presents the rural space as a timeless repository of conservative and patriarchal values, which paradoxically is in line with Francoist official cinema. The fact that, as Schroeder argues, the film structure and narrative favours Patricia's story against Milady's, along with Marirrosi's narrative death at the end of the film, implies that the film 'is ambivalent in its characterisation of immigrant others, and it ends up reproducing an ideology of exclusion' (2006).

However, Bollaín also challenges the idyllic idea of the Spanish rural landscape as a site of good moral values and traditions. The two main sites of contestation and tensions due to the arrival of Patricia and Milady are the spaces traditionally associated with women and men, the private and public spaces epitomized by the kitchen and the bar. The bar is a space for men, only the female owner is allowed here, but Milady is bored at home and has decided to work in the bar. In the village bar, men do 'men things' like watching porn or football and playing cards. The peaceful atmosphere of the bar is disrupted when some problematic young men come looking for trouble. One of them asks for the 'black women' saying 'where are you keeping them?' When Milady appears they carry on speaking about all the different prostitutes that one can find at some road junction nearby which provokes Carmelo's reaction to start a fight. Finally, Carmelo takes Milady out of the bar, puts his jacket over her and says 'now, enough of this nonsense, you are going home with me now', blaming her for creating this conflict. Again, her exclusion appears to be a consequence of macho attitudes, but also it refers to the fact that Milady was in a place where she should have not been. The rural bar is traditionally considered a male domain and this bar will continue to be so, thanks to this expulsion that Carmelo makes appear as a result of Milady's intrusion, risking his male honour and leisure time in the bar.

Kobayashi and Peake refer to Carole Pateman's assertion that 'women are constructed historically as the disorder that opposes the order of civilized men' (1994: 230). The scene creates tension deliberately to make Carmelo react aggressively towards the other men. In the context of a melodramatic reading, he is the hero defending his woman's honour, and therefore his actions are understood as expected of him, to protect Milady but also to protect his own dignity as a man. Milady is a victim of the situation, because as a young urban Cuban just arrived in rural Spain she cannot be expected to know what the spatial rules here are. From this point of view, this is an example of how the melodramatic effects work towards the exposure of the tensions that can be created when the characters do not have the same degree of knowledge of the rules attached to their spatial surroundings. However local Carmelo is also a victim of the expectations upon which those rules are established, and so both he and Milady have to leave the bar.

The film attempts to redistribute 'the sensible' and tries to open up the space for political argumentation by conferring visibility on Patricia's and Milady's problems and difficulties due

to their Caribbean origin, the colour of their skin and their political status in Spain. At one point, Patricia tells Milady that living in the village makes life easier for her; she can drive without a driving licence because here the local police do not seem to mind. Milady replies that despite that sense of safety she still wants to leave the village and see other places, but Patricia alerts her that it will not be that easy for her to move around the country being a black woman without residency. This scene places both women in very different positions. Patricia is ready to sacrifice herself so she feels safe and accepted, and the rural life provides her with this easier life. On the other hand, Milady rejects this safety, which for her would involve trying to hide and give up her wishes to see the world. Then the viewer aligns with her viewpoint and can identify with her, seeing the hostility and the ugliness of the space as Milady sees it, with the camera allowing her point of view while Patricia drives through the road in the middle of the barren fields.

Bollaín also shows and condemns the inward-looking mentality of Spaniards when facing otherness and difference. Aurora thinks that Patricia and Milady have come to the village to take advantage of Carmelo and Damián, get documents, steal their money and run away. She explains her point of view to the men in the bar. The men disagree with her, especially in the case of Patricia, because she has come with her children to be a family with Damián, but Aurora thinks that Patricia is even more likely to leave because of the children. Aurora says that she has nothing against 'those people', 'but each one should be in his/her own place' (my translation), to which the male locals gathered in the bar respond with a Spanish popular proverb that says: 'quien lejos va a casar, o va engañado o va a engañar' ('he/she who marries somebody from far away, he intends to deceive or to be deceived' my translation). Bollaín brings to the surface how inbuilt in Spanish rural mentality the xenophobic idea is of keeping one's place safe by means of excluding all those who come from outside. Bollaín criticizes this mentality and makes Aurora, a Spanish woman of a certain power (she is the owner of the bar where implicitly only men are allowed), the instigator and claimant of those xenophobic ideas. This leads to Massey's idea of 'the imagination of defensive places, of the rights of 'local people' to their own 'local places', of a world divided by difference and the smack of firm boundaries, a geographical imagination of nationalisms' (2005: 86).

11.5 Spatial Contestation

The film shows the Caribbean bodies and culture merging in the rural Castilian community, particularly through the relationship between Patricia and Gregoria. Bollaín shows the problematic arising through their relationship, that of Self and Other and how it resolves in favour of a dialogue of understanding and acceptance. According to Cavielles-Llamas, this relationship is not only based on racial difference, since the symbolic power of the mother is strongly tied to Spanish domesticity 'and these tensions between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are very common in the social reality', (2009: 112, my translation). The private space of the home (kitchen) becomes the site of contestation, a microcosm of the nation, where the two women position themselves and struggle to gain or maintain their power. Gregoria criticises the way Patricia has cooked the beans, because in her opinion beans need to have broth, otherwise it is not right. This is a clear example of how Bollaín exemplifies Spanish's ethnocentrism, in a tendency to consider their familiar traditions as the norm and good practice while rejecting all that is unknown or foreign. Domesticity and cultural difference serve to stage the way Gregoria

struggles to accept Patricia in her home because she is different to that which she has known all her life. As Gordillo states 'Ethnocentrism is based on comparison and prejudice' (2006: 217, my translation).

Gregoria fears being left alone and begins to have a better relationship with Patricia. Bollaín uses Damián's father's grave as the symbolic setting where Gregoria and Patricia have the conversation that will end the conflict between the two of them. While Gregoria is cleaning the tomb, Patricia asks her if she loved him a lot. Gregoria answers that 'he was a good man' and Patricia replies, 'just like Damián'. Then, Gregoria's face reveals how she has come to understand that Patricia and herself are more similar than she initially thought. This coming to terms with the recognition of the closeness between the Other and Self is achieved thanks to this scene, and as Duncan Chesney states, 'the real question then is whether given images engage us in critical speculation and open new paths for thinking' (2010: 23). The struggles Patricia and Gregoria go through in order to share space, and how they ultimately learn to understand each other, provide these paths for thinking and for understanding how space is negotiated and can be shared between the local and the newcomer, between mother and daughter-in-law. Eventually things will dramatically change, as we see how she accepts Patricia and her friends, as they all appear in the final photograph at Janay's First Communion.

What is problematic is this idea that calls to mind what migrants have in common with locals so we all come to understand and accept each other. Coming to terms with difference is a challenging process, but Bollaín resolves it by looking at what the two women may have in common rather than by embracing difference and engaging with otherness. The film does not promote the idea of difference as meeting point; on the contrary, it opts for the more conventional strategy of searching for what is common to female experiences in order to bring women together as equals. Todd May points out that for Rancière it is not in the name of an identity or of a sameness that equality is acted out; it is in the name of difference (2007: 11), because, as Rancière states, 'the essence of equality is in fact not so much to unify as to declassify, to undo the supposed naturalness of orders and replace it with the controversial figures of division' (1995: 32-33).

Through a Lefebvrian lens, analysis of this film can suggest how the space can be represented either as 'absolute' or 'abstract or conceived' space. For Lefebvre, in 'absolute' space man populates nature, retaining a bond with his environment; this bond is severed in the 'abstract' space, which is governed by the logic of capitalism (1991: 33 and 46-53). Alfonso and his greenhouse or plant nursery is a symbolic metaphor of the way the outside is brought into the inside to be controlled, nursed and kept safe and in order. This would be the perceived or abstract space, which is also unnatural, as Bollaín also sees it. As a result of this, it is only natural that Milady and Marirrosi will have to leave while Patricia will be able to stay, because she has been able to lose her own identity more and conform to the village's order, which makes more viable her adaptation and naturalisation in Santa Eulalia. This is exemplified by her sudden change of clothing and hairstyle: upon arrival her hair is down, she wears bright and tight clothes, make-up and big earrings, but once married to Damián, she wears masculine clothing such as big, dark woollen jumpers, large tracksuit bottoms, no make-up and no earrings. She also does all the domestic and farming chores. However, she keeps her sensual warmth for Damián in bed at night. The effect it tries to give is that of a woman who has learnt how to adapt to the village

norms, changing her looks for the public sphere but able to keep her 'Caribbean warmth' in the private space of the bedroom, which is assumed to be acceptable because she is married to Damián and sex scenes are not explicitly shown. Her Caribbean identity is then neutered in the public sphere and only allowed in the private one, therefore complying with the consensual idea of equality with conditions.

Nevertheless, the film also does sometimes privilege this space as 'lived', for instance when we see Janay and Milady walking through the paths, moving though the fields and running in the streets. The space becomes something different thanks to these new bodies that are traversing it, especially as it is only their bodies that can be seen moving and walking in the streets when they are on-screen. The countryside is still and empty of human movement, except for the movement that they bring to it when they move through it. This can also be equated to what de Certeau calls 'tactics', because 'the walker transforms each spatial signifier into something else' (1984: 98), so if we follow de Certeau's analysis on the rhetoric of walking, we can describe Milady's walking in the village as a way of her body creating 'a mobile organicity in the environment, a sequence of phatic *topoi*' (1984: 99) because 'to walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper' (1984: 103). This can also be linked to Massey's words when she writes 'an (idealised) notion of an era when places were (supposedly) inhabited by coherent and homogeneous communities is set against the current fragmentation and disruption' (1994: 146).

Bollaín also uses Patricia's daughter Janay and her connection with this rural space as the main force of disruption of spatial power relations. A scene that exemplifies this occurs when Damián has Janay in his lap so the girl can learn to drive the tractor. After a short while, Patricia arrives in the field to talk to him about Fran, so Damián gets down but leaves Janay sitting in the driver seat watching them. After Patricia's explanation, Damián is angry and asks her to leave. He goes back to the tractor and asks Janay to come down so she can leave with her mother. Janay does not move and then Damián takes her down by force, while at the same time Patricia is shouting to her daughter to come down. The scene is full of tension, with both Patricia and Damián shouting, demanding the girl to get down of the tractor and the scared and confused face of the girl. When Damián finally pulls her down roughly, Patricia's shakes her and tells her off for not doing what she was being asked to do. Then Janay escapes from her mother's arms and runs into the fields till she is out of camera view. Janay thus becomes the symbolic value that has moved from Damián's arms through Patricia's to swiftly move and disappear into the landscape. Patricia keeps calling her, accompanied by a fading shot of the landscape. Due to Patricia's lies, Damián wants her and her children to leave. Patricia tries to make Damián see that she is trustworthy now and that she wants to stay with him, but Damián exhorts her to go. Patricia accepts, but then it is Janay who challenges Damián's decision by running away from both of them into the rural landscape and hiding from both, the diegetic characters and the viewers. The way the camera follows Janay running into the far distance, disobeying her mother, reveals a contestation of the spatial rules, which works towards the disruption of that patriarchal and spatial system, which Damián enforces and with which Patricia complies. This symbolises Janay's identification with the rural landscape, which also means her integration in and appropriation of that same space.

Bollaín and the scriptwriter Llamazares define this film as 'unnatural' my translation, (Bollaín and Llamazares 2000: 47), but paradoxically it uses nature metaphors as the centre of the narrative. The title, to begin with, refers to the flowers from another world, evocative of the New World that Columbus discovered and conquered for Spain. Besides, in the rural space, people work the soil, growing crops and typically living more in contact with nature than those in an urban space. Moreover, these flowers/women represent the fertility of their wombs as they also evoke the fertility of the fields surrounding Santa Eulalia, because without them and their capacity to procreate, there is no future for the productivity of the rural space, as without farmers to work the land the village will die. However, this unnaturalness that Bollaín understands is taking place in the village is proven right when Milady leaves. Similarly, the soundtrack also contributes to the creation of this 'unreal' or un-natural space. The music's effect helps to remove the viewers from the landscape so they can be detached from their national prejudices, and in this way it promotes spectatorial identification with the foreign characters.

In an email received on 22nd June 2012, Pascal Gaigne, the musician in charge of the film's soundtrack, informed me how he used unusual instruments like Berimbao, Kanun, Psalterio and Udus together with more traditional ones like piano and accordion, to create in his own words an 'unreal' sound. For example, he used a bass clarinet in the shots of the aerial views of Santa Eulalia and its surroundings, with diegetic sounds of the noises of the village, like dogs barking and sheep's bells. The intention, according to Gaigne, is to exemplify the strange situation happening in the village as something anti-natural, as well as creating distance from reality, thus allowing a certain restlessness to emerge in order to take the viewer away from the typical rural realism. This sensory experience promotes an emotional interpretation of the narrative where seasons move slowly with long shots of the rural village and surroundings promoting the experience of rural life as static and oppressive as well as un-natural. Nevertheless, at other times music in the film helps towards the restoration of the status quo. There is ambiguity at the end when Janay and Orlando are seemingly already part of the community. This is shown when they are sitting with the big group of children waiting for the arrival of the new bus. However, it is also relevant to point out that in this final scene, the extradiegetic music consists of a tune by a Spanish traditional village band, similar to the diegetic one that welcomed the women in the village when coming down from the bus at the beginning, but different from the extradiegetic music from the very beginning with the images of the bus and the rural landscapes. At the very beginning, the music was a 'Catalonian rumba' with lyrics about loneliness. Considering the choice of music, it can be said that the film offers a regression instead of a progression into the cultural fusion that it originally pursues, since the first song belongs to a genre that fuses Romany flamenco with Afro-Cuban rhythms, while the last tunes go back to the most traditional rhythms of a Spanish village, the music of its local band.

Interestingly, space is at times kept in order, working towards the exclusion of the foreign bodies. Upon the arrival of the bus for the first time, the banner welcoming the newcomers reads 'Estáis en vuestra casa' ('Make yourself at home' my translation). However this welcome has conditions, as the diegetic music reveals later on when the Spanish female singer sings '*Contamíname*', a very well known Spanish song, the lyrics of which imply that you, 'the other', can come and 'contaminate me' but only under certain conditions. In this way, the other can come and stay safe 'under my branch and under my coat' only if he or she comes with 'kisses and not with smoke that asphyxiates the air'. The song establishes from the beginning the

conditions under which the outsiders will be welcome and feel safe, but then they need to conform to the rules of the village. Very soon we see how Patricia, and later on Milady, are not welcome, particularly by two Spanish women, Gregoria and Aurora, the bar owner.

11.6 The Economic Order and Melodrama

The space produced in the village also has to be understood from an economic point of view, because these foreign women have been invited to make the village economically viable. Carmelo's wealth, for instance, will continue if he is successful in his relationship with Milady and has heirs to whom he may pass on his wealth. This is a project traditionally associated with melodrama, which, as Hayward reminds us, grew with capitalism and is closely related to it. It represents 'the need of the family to protect, through the inheritance system, the bourgeoisie's newly acquired possessions (including property)', then 'the family becomes the site of patriarchy and capitalism, and reproduces it' (1996: 201).

In the same way, Patricia is contributing to the economics of the family as well as of the village. She works hard with the animals and the fields, and she is pregnant, which will help the viability of the family and of the village in the future. There is then a close link between the organization of the space, the melodramatic elements and the compliance with social order or consensus. With regard to this, Lefebvre's words become relevant, as for him '(Social) space is a (social) product [...] [and] the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action [...] [I]n addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power' (1991: 26).

The village needs the women for its economic viability and the men need to pass on their properties through heirs, and therefore they need to create families. The space the men are trying to construct is what will serve them in order to carry on controlling and dominating their space. As Damián and Patricia adjust to each other's values their relationship will be successful. However, Carmelo and Alfonso do not want or do not know how to adjust to the foreign women's needs, something which will bring the loss of their women and consequently, although perhaps only temporarily, the impossibility of having a family. The fact that we do not see the future of the women who have left, and the fact that we all know that future buses will continue to arrive, implies that the men have imposed their control and dominance in maintaining their space and consensus, and that only women who adhere to their imposed patriarchal system will be able to stay. Consensus, then, overpowers dissensus, particularly thanks to the spatial organization intensified by the melodramatic effects. The film's genre or mode also provides a basis upon which analyse how Bollaín uses a melodramatic narrative structure that 'works toward the restoration of the status quo, in particular by the use of circular time' (Schroeder, 2008).

As Hayward describes, following Cook (1985), 'the melodrama is an oxymoronic product in that it has to produce dramatic action whilst staying firmly in place; this gives it an inherently circular thematic structure' (1996: 207). Lefebvre states 'As for time, dominated by repetition and circularity, overwhelmed by the establishment of an immobile space which is the locus and environment of realized Reason, it loses all meaning' (1991: 21). The couples' narratives are

linked to the seasons, the bus arrives in summer, and they settle and have tensions in autumn, with more pronounced tensions or ruptures in winter. Spring shows Janay's First Communion in celebration of Patricia's compliance to the national social structure. Finally, summer again shows the new bus approaching the village. Consequently, the film also plays with claustrophobia, because as Hayward explains, in melodrama, circularity also signals claustrophobia with time made to stand still, suffocating and oppressing especially the women (1996: 207).

According to Schroder Rodríguez (2008) the message of the film alternates between the celebration of women's freedom through the characters of Spanish Marirrosi and Cuban Milady, and the reinforcement of patriarchal values through Patricia, who is incorporated into Damián's national family. I agree with Schroder on the way the film creates this tension, which I compare to Rancière's concepts of consensus (Patricia complying with the patriarchal order) and dissensus (Milady and Marirrosi's choosing themselves before a man and leaving the village). However, this dissensus is only partly achieved and can be read as a disguised consensus, since Milady and Marirrosi's leaving the village also shows their inability to adapt to rural life, which symbolises how the film portrays a village that goes back to the normal rural order of things, free from the tensions that these two liberated and more independent women have been bringing upon them. Hence, Santa Eulalia becomes a space that is contested and negotiated, but always under the locals' terms. Furthermore, the three women's narratives can be analysed in a parallelism that presents remarkable differences that I suggest are directly related to their ethnic origin.

11.7 Contrasted Masculinities, Ethnicity, Sex and Power

The film reenacts traditional Spanish masculine roles reaffirming the 'good' Spanish man's dominance over the colonised subject, the 'mulatta' Patricia, and his victory against the dangerous and conflictive black Caribbean migrant. *Flores* fails to produce a significant level of contestation and disruption because it does not fully show the potential political agency of the migrants in this new rural space. Furthermore, stereotypes are still reinforced, especially in the representation of the male migrant character.

The film exoticises the Caribbean characters, complying with the stereotypes of highly sexualised men and women, which are already found in other Spanish films representing Caribbean migrants. Kamala Kempadoo asserts that 'exoticism was both an attitude and a set of practices' (no date) by Europeans upon Caribbeans during slavery, which helped constitute the 'brown-skinned', colonised, enslaved women and their lands as sites for sexual pleasure and exploitation. This exoticism, Kempadoo continues, aided the formation of the woman prostitute whose body was hugely profitable to the slaveholder. According to Kempadoo, exoticism has had important implications in the constitution of Caribbean subjectivities and relations, and in the way tourism nowadays plays an important role in the continued constitution of images of the 'exotic mulatta' and the 'black stud' which are 'appropriated by young female and male sex workers in order to increase their possibilities of securing a better future' (no date). Kempadoo affirms that 'Caribbean men and women alike are constructed in tourist imaginations as racialized-sexual subjects/objects – the hypersexual 'black male stud' and the 'hot' mulatta or

black woman–whose main roles are to service and please the visitor' (Kempadoo, no date). For Kempaloo, these '[t]erritories that once served as sex havens for the colonial elite are today frequented by sex tourists, and several of the islands' economies now depend upon the region's racialized, sexualized image' (2004: 1). On the other hand, McClintock observes that even before the era of Victorian imperialism, America and Africa were a 'porno-tropic' for the European imagination, and 'within this porno-tropic tradition, women figured as the epitome of sexual aberration and excess' (1995: 22). In addition to this, as Rosabel Argote states, there is an inclination in contemporary cinema to represent the migrant woman as prostitute, which reinforces a deeply rooted stereotype (2003: 6) that places the woman as a racialised and sexualised figure.

The film starts with a shot of a bus full of Spanish and foreign women crossing the deserted rural fields of central Guadalajara. They will arrive in the small village of Santa Eulalia following an advert from the single men of this village asking for women to come and visit. The women arrive at a party organised by the village's bachelors in their efforts to find a wife. National and migrant women in the bus are visually separated to reinforce the contrast between them and set the tone for what it is to come. At the front, the nationals dress with more conservative, colourless clothes. They seem suspicious and complain about the fact that 'these migrants are everywhere now'. In the meantime, the migrants at the back of the bus chat joyfully, narrating sexual jokes and laughing loudly, wearing revealing bright clothes and lots of make-up, which contrasts heavily with the more conservative looks and cold attitude of the Spanish women in the bus. The initial contrast among the Spanish and the Dominican women works towards the exoticisation of the migrants. This is done through an explicitly contrasted representation of Spanish/Caribbean femininities with the austerely dressed and quieter white Spanish women at the front of the bus and the loud, sexualised, brown-skinned Dominicans at the back. This contrast is also reinforced by Carmelo's words who tells Damián about his 'Cuban girlfriend' whom he met in Havana. He tries to persuade Damián to come with him on his next visit to Cuba, as sex with 'brown-skinned' women is much better than with 'women from here' (my translation). We then learn that Carmelo is bringing Milady from Havana to the village in autumn. Although the sexual myth associated with Caribbean women will be questioned in the first sexual scene between Milady and Carmelo, Bollaín does not contradict this idea of Carmelo's stereotypical conception of the sexuality of 'brown women', referring to Caribbean or mulattas, since from the beginning of the film we have seen how the Dominican women at the back in the bus seem to be very different and more sexually open than the Spanish women who are sitting at the front.

We also witness a paternalistic way of reinforcing female otherness and exoticization in the scene when Alfonso in his greenhouse tells Marirrosi, referring to the African orchids he has just transplanted, that 'with care, everything grows'. Alfonso means that the success of the transplantation of the migrant women (foreign flowers) in this place will depend on how well they are looked after. This paternalistic vision from Alfonso, as well as the way the film compares the nice female migrants to exotic foreign flowers, reinforces stereotypes with regard to female otherness, since as Stam and Spence remind us, 'the insistence on "positive images", finally, obscures the fact that "nice" images might at times be as pernicious as overtly degrading ones, providing a bourgeois facade for paternalism, a more pervasive racism' (1983: 3).

Alfonso's position of power is also shown by how he and Marirrosi end their relationship. Their fate as a couple is perhaps subjected to the fact that she will not be able to have children due to her age, and besides, she is also the mother of a grown-up boy, so her duty as a mother is better understood, as she is capable of sacrificing her love for Alfonso to stay closer to her son and to the urban space where she belongs. Although their separation implies a condemnation of the lack of negotiation or compromise on the part of Alfonso, it eventually benefits the village, as he is the main figure in the reconstruction process of Santa Eulalia. Although he has failed to transplant Marirrosi, perhaps it will not matter that much because that transplantation will not necessarily bear the fruits that the village requires for growing. As Neale argues, the 'unhappy ending can function as a means of postponing rather than destroying the possibility of fulfillment of a wish' because, as he tells the other unsuccessful bachelors, they may find a wife in the next bus, which makes the wish 'preserved and re-stated rather than abandoned altogether' (1986: 21). Therefore the melodramatic effects contribute to the restoration of the consensual order of the village by excluding the more problematic female characters, or those who could not favour the restoration of Santa Eulalia as an economically viable village.

However, this male local and female migrant relationship of power is more complex in the case of Milady and Carmelo, because although Carmelo fails to control and domesticate Milady, as their first on-screen sexual encounter demonstrates, he also appears as a victim of his own transgression. Carmelo's attempts to control Milady are exemplified by trying to cover her up. For instance, when Milady arrives in the village he places his jacket on her, and later on in the story, after the fight in the bar, he angrily covers her up with his jacket again. But this is also what even Patricia tries to do when she meets Milady for the first time, which can be understood as how Patricia has already subdued to the control of the village over her own body. Unlike Patricia, Milady keeps her summer tight clothes on, which symbolises how she will not comply with the village's rules and implies that her stay will be temporary.

When Milady arrives, the old men of the village praise her beauty as if they were talking about an animal: 'What a set of teeth', 'What lips' and 'What beauty'. The comedy implied in the scene does not help to separate Milady as a character from her spectacular foreign body, and this will also have other implications, such as whether Milady's subjectivity can be represented seriously or not. These old men also talk as if Milady were an animal in another scene when they see her walking on her own, going out of the village. They say 'there she goes, Carmelo's one, if he does not tame her soon...' anticipating the problematic consequences of leaving a woman free. These men, in the style of the chorus in Greek tragedies, echo the patriarchal voices with which the old traditional Spain regards the female body as animalistic in order to keep it subordinate and in place, dominated by the superior male. Milady goes to Valencia to spend the night clubbing, and on her return she finds Carmelo's fists pummelling her into the ground. For Martín-Cabrera, Bollaín's film 'demonstrates that the articulation of postcolonial memories provokes a reemergence of colonialism in the form of cultural exclusions (neo racism) and racial violence' (2002: 43). But this violence comes from the act of disobedience from Milady, when she chooses 'knowledge' (to discover new places) over obedience. She is then punished for not keeping herself within the boundaries that Carmelo sets for her.

Milady is also symbolically kept under the colonial gaze thanks to the use of clothes. She arrives with tight bright leggings with the stars and stripes of the USA flag, implying that her arrival in

the village is an omen of her freedom and non-servitude to the Spanish nation, but the leggings also remind us of Cubans' lack of freedom, in itself due to the USA. It is no coincidence, then, that Milady wears the same leggings when she finally escapes and leaves Carmelo and the village behind for good. In this way, Milady remains subordinated to US values, and her escape and supposed liberation from these Spanish men and rural life is only an illusion, since her nationality and skin colour are an impediment to her complete and real freedom and she will be inevitably subjected to capitalism and globalisation.

However, it is the Caribbean male migrant who brings the major tension in the film. Fran, Patricia's former husband, comes to the village looking for money because what Patricia has been sending him has not been enough to keep him away from trouble. He threatens Patricia with telling Damián about them still being married so her marriage with Damián is not legal. Fran is the ultimate figure of disruption, chaos and danger in the film, as he is the one who breaks with the apparent harmony that exists in the lives of Damián and Patricia so far. The film contrasts both men, Fran and Damián, on several occasions. Damián seems sexually awkward, very shy but extremely kind and polite with Patricia and her children. On the other hand, Fran is sexual, an irresponsible father without scruples, who is ready to do anything in order to get the money he wants from Patricia. The sexual impact that Fran has upon Patricia is revealed by how, the same day that Fran has visited her and asked her if the 'little bald man' satisfies her in bed, Patricia asks Damián to say sexy things to her. This underlines the idea that Patricia is probably not sexually fulfilled and that she is somehow missing Fran. This contrast reinforces the idea of the sexually colder Spanish rural man as the ideal father and husband figure against the idea of the dark Caribbean man as sexualized, selfish and untrustworthy. According to Pajaczkowska and Young '[w]hites frequently attempt to make [b]lacks invisible in cultural production by ignoring or subordinating presence through crass stereotyping' (2000: 369). Even though Bollaín has tried to focus on creating a film that represents the migratory experience from a female point of view, she has fallen into stereotype when representing the male Caribbean migrant.

The relationship that better exemplifies how the status quo of the village is restored is the one between Patricia and Damián. According to Warwick Mules, 'in melodrama, the problems of the world are displaced onto the feminine as the site for the struggle of good over evil.' As Mules continues, if the melodrama features a male hero he will be rescuing the woman, fighting for her honour, restoring the family or seeking 'fulfillment through romance with a good woman leading to marriage' (1998: 74). However, if the hero is a female, Mules affirms that she is then generally the 'bearer of a potential breakdown in the family which needs to be restored, usually through some kind of sacrifice on her part' (1998: 75). An important point that Mules stresses is that the 'feminization inherent in melodrama is not necessarily in favor of women, but simply locates women as a symbolic site for the enactment of patriarchal authority' (Ibid.), and it is Patricia who becomes this symbolic site for the enactment of patriarchal authority. She is a mother of two young children who, from the start, explains to her fellow migrant friends in the bus, and later to Carmelo, that she is sacrificing herself for her children. As she says to Damián as soon as she meets him, 'I am looking out for my children, I do not think of myself anymore'. Therefore it can be understood that Patricia quickly adheres to the rules of the village for the sake of her children, to give them stability and a future. However, what started as a mother's sacrifice becomes something different, since she finally falls in love with Damián. According to

Steve Neale, 'melodrama is full of characters who wish to be loved, who are worthy of love, and whom the spectator therefore wishes to be loved' (1986: 17).

Neale discusses some of the key elements found in melodrama that contribute to producing tears and pleasure in the viewer. Neale starts with the mode of narration, the way narrative events are ordered and motivated, marked with multiple surprises, coincidences, and last minute rescues and revelations. Neale states that the longer the delay, the more likely the viewer will cry 'because the powerlessness of our position will be intensified, whatever the outcome of events, "happy" or "sad", too late or just in time' (1986: 12). *Flores* offers these key elements of melodrama, for example, in one of the final scenes where Gregoria's acceptance of Patricia is at its highest point. She tells Damián 'your family is leaving... do you want them to go?' to which Damián silently reacts by hurrying to the car, where Patricia is ready to leave. After they look at each other intensely, he moves to the back of the car and starts taking out the luggage while the faces of Janay and Orlando show their happiness, and Patricia puts her hands over her face, unable to contain her tears of joy. This moment has been delayed, in a melodramatic style, so the reconciliation moment promotes the tears in the viewer as it has done with Patricia.

While Milady suddenly disappears forever without a trace, Marirrosi does it progressively, and Patricia becomes the embodiment of the successful transplantation into the national family, as already mentioned, with a final photo shot of all the family, Spanish and Dominicans together at Janay's First Communion. This family photograph means the unification of the family as a whole and the integration of Patricia and her children into Gregoria and Damián's group. Patricia shows an incipient pregnancy, which signifies her successful transplantation bearing the fruit that will ensure the future of the village. Her staying has mainly depended on Gregoria and Damián but also on her willingness to adapt to the Spanish village. Bollaín tries to show at the end of the film how the newcomers are reshaping the village. Now the banner welcoming the new bus is written in several languages, and the group of children waiting for the new bus includes two darker-skinned faces: Janay's and Orlando's. These progressive changes imply the way the rural village is opening up to the outside but there is still a feeling of enclosure and consensus ruling the atmosphere because in order for Janay and Orlando to stay, their mother had to conform to the traditions and norms of the village.

Santaolalla describes the way the film's last sequence is both similar and dissimilar to the one at the beginning. The position of the camera at the beginning remains mostly with the women inside the bus, whereas at the end "it remains emphatically distanced here, denying access to either the world inside the bus or, most significantly, the by now familiar inhabitants and locations in the village' (2004: 137). And although the group of children, now including Janay and Orlando, symbolises the potential for regeneration and integration, Santaolalla affirms that *Flores* still 'ends up constructing Santa Eulalia, its surrounding landscape and its inhabitants, as another "Other", equally, if not more, unfamiliar than the women who come from beyond' (2004: 137).

11.8 Conclusion

As has already been established in the documentary *Extranjeras*, the title in *Flores* places the women as naturally removed from the national Spanish viewer's imagination, which adds to their exoticisation and stereotypification, as if they were essentially different for being from a distant land. Patricia, Milady and Marirrosi represent the flowers that belong to another world, not only the world of a different nation but also a far more removed world, as we are encountering a rural village in the middle of Castille and on the verge of extinction.

Santa Eulalia becomes the site where disruption has taken place ever since the village started the depopulation process. However, the representational logic and the melodramatic elements work towards the restoration of the status quo of the village existing prior to the arrival of the three women. Patricia's narrative is the main part of the film, which resolves in favour of her adaptation to the village's rules. This, at the same time, reinforces the continuity of the village's normal order of things. This continuity leads us to consider how Patricia and her children are integrated into the rural Spanish life more than the village is enabling her and her children to keep their identities and thus influence the village to a greater extent.

In sum, the melodramatic techniques searching for cause-effect tend to work towards restoration instead of disruption. The film's narrative logic reorganises the order of things and does not counteract the hierarchies of power in the village despite the images that subvert the distribution of the space. Moreover, the film tries to offer an ending where difference is celebrated and a multicultural society is positive and possible, as the images of Janay and Orlando playing with the other children try to imply, but following Rancière's, Massey's, de Certeau's and Lefebvre's theories, there is no subversion that could effectively reorder the sensible and the power-geometries in Santa Eulalia. There is not enough contestation in this film, given the potentiality that the rural space can offer, to begin to think differently about ways to challenge representations of migrants in rural Spain.

12. Globalization, Migrants and the Ethical Community in *Agua con sal* (Pedro Pérez Rosado, 2005)

12.1 Introduction

Agua con sal tells the story of two marginal women, an illegal migrant from Cuba and a Spanish prostitute, who become friends in a town in Valencia. The film criticises the illness of modern society brought about by economic developments, which result in isolation, individualism and disintegration of the family. This is set against all the positive values that are reflected through the portrayal of the Cuban female migrant character, Olga.

Agua con sal also uses bodily intimacy as a metaphor, both to represent contestations of ideological borders and to demonstrate the impact of globalization on the bodies of the characters. Emotions of love, affection and desire are conditioned by the effects of globalization, and so physical interaction and sexuality in particular are linked here with commodification, power struggle, but also with exchange. This film helps visualize what Davies describes as one of 'the most invisible elements of globalization: its penetration of and movement through bodies' (2006: 34). I will therefore analyse how *Agua con sal* explores and criticizes globalization as the process which has caused and accelerated the economic and social crisis that is depicted in Spain because 'globalization is not simply an issue of economics, but very much a political phenomenon' (D'Arzy, 2005).

Through the marginal characters in this film, the viewer can relate larger cultural globalizing forces with small stories of human beings and appreciate the consequences of the effects of the globalization process. To analyze how this film engages globalization, I will draw on Zygmunt Bauman's ideas about postmodern communities and the human consequences of globalization. For Bauman, 'an integral part of the globalizing processes is progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion' (1998: 3). Pérez Rosado exposes these human consequences that Bauman criticizes in his work throughout the film, thanks to his focus on the marginal and isolated characters and their interactions with each other and with their environment. In order to understand this representation, I will also draw on Fredric Jameson and his account of 'cognitive mapping'.

As Colin MacCabe describes, through cognitive mapping, Jameson 'understands how the individual's representation of his or her social world can escape the traditional critique of representation because the mapping is intimately related to practice – to the individual's successful negotiation of urban space' (1992: xiv). According to Jameson, postmodern subjects have no means to represent who they are or what their positions are in the world. They 'cannot develop the political capacities to critically think about or struggle to change the world' (Mirrlees, 2005). *Agua con sal* illustrates this statement in a way, as the characters appear powerless in the face of the globalised system that oppresses and neglects them. Nevertheless, as Jameson argues, human subjects can develop the conceptual apparatus of 'cognitive mapping' to politically resist capitalism. I will analyse how the characters in *Agua con sal* develop this conceptual apparatus of 'cognitive mapping' to effectively resist the economic and social system.

Following these ideas, my main aim is to look at how *Agua con sal* exposes and represents this economic system in which the characters are immersed, and to explore to what extent the dialectic between film and economics opens up the way to influence politics. Thus, this would in turn have an impact on economics, and whether in doing so it counteracts the master narrative of globalization, which, as Manning and Shackford-Bradley affirm, 'combines political, economic, and cultural terms to project a singular linear progression toward industrialization and capitalism, modernity and urbanization, and secular democracy and a high-tech enhanced middle-class lifestyle' (2010: 36).

For Manning and Shackford-Bradley, the local is positioned in this narrative as inferior when contrasted with the global, but, as they affirm, 'this construct has recently been appropriated and inverted by those who would resist globalization. Local space has been granted new status as the site of their resistance' (2010: 36). We must refer to a certain redistribution of the sensible in Rancière's terms if we can demonstrate that *Agua con sal* achieves this disruption in the linear progression of the master narrative of globalization through the portrayal of the subjectivities of displaced characters and their local individual stories.

The film exposes and criticizes the human consequences of economic development in Spain and takes the migrant characters' cognitive mapping as the link to their desired imagined spaces back home, despite the lack of economic resources there. Although Olga's strong moral values lead her to reject this system, and although she ends up leaving Spain, Jonny, the male migrant character without those moral values, will choose to stay, subordinated to the economic order in which he is unhappy but from which he seems unable to escape. I will analyse how the relationships between migrants and locals take place, as well as how they work towards exposing the exclusion of the migrants. Especially significant will be the analysis of the way the characters react against the hostile environment in which they seem to find themselves forced to live. I intend to present the characters' possibilities for resistance, as they are immersed in an increasingly disintegrated globalized world, by exploring how sexuality, migration and labour factors interact in a shrinking public and political space.

I will also base my argument on Thomas Elsaesser's ideas, who also discusses Jacques Rancière's critique of the ethical turn or what he calls 'le tournant éthique dans l'esthétique et la politique' (Elsaesser, 2011: 9). Elsaesser's and Rancière's theories will help me analyse the consequences of the way ethics are represented and explored in this film. As Elsaesser explains, Rancière distinguishes between the political (working towards dissensus) and the ethical (working towards consensus), the latter represented either by the multicultural, but harmonious, whole of consensus (*l'éthique soft*) or the radical alterity and the state of exception (*l'éthique hard*). For Rancière, this new way of understanding and approaching ethics has replaced political and aesthetic visions that might challenge hegemonic structures of power and thought. Rancière strongly criticizes this ethical turn for being not only 'a simple appeasement of the various types of dissensus between politics and art in a consensual order', but also because it rather appears to be 'the ultimate form of the will to absolutize this dissensus' (2010: 201). According to Rancière, 'ethics amounts to the dissolution of norm into fact: in other words, the subsumption of all forms of discourse and practice beneath the same indistinct point of view' (2010: 184). This consensual, indistinct point of view suppresses the division of different forms of morality and of right, it abolishes the difference between what is right and what is fact, and therefore norm and fact becomes the same

indistinctive thing. As Rancière puts it, this is how a consensual mode of symbolic structuration is constituted in the community that 'evacuates the political core constituting it, namely dissensus' (2010: 188). Rancière distinguishes between political and ethical community, explaining that 'a political community is in effect a community that is structurally divided, not between divergent interest groups and opinions, but divided in relation to itself' (2010: 188). In this way, for Rancière:

> The political community thus tends to be transformed into an ethical community, into a community that gathers together a single people in which everyone is supposed to be counted. Only this procedure of counting comes up against that problematic remainder that it terms 'the excluded' (2010: 189).

In the political community, the excluded is a conflictual actor carrying a right not yet recognized, including himself as a supplementary political subject, whereas in the ethical community there is no need for this supplement to arise because everybody is included, and so, as Rancière explains, this leads to a:

> Non-status for the excluded in the structuration of the community. On the one hand, the excluded is merely the one who accidentally falls outside the great equality of all, and these are those to whom the community must extend a hand in order to re-establish the 'social bond'. On the other hand, the excluded becomes the radical other, the one who is separated from the community for the mere fact of being alien to it, of not sharing the identity that binds each to all, and of threatening the community in each of us (2010: 189).

Elsaesser refers to how Rancière, considering politics and aesthetics as two communicating vessels, sees the 'politics of rational management and consensus (such as practiced by the EU) as the very abrogation of politics' (Elsaesser, 2010: 9). Therefore, I will explore how this political community is at stake in *Agua con sal* and how the relationship between ethics, politics and culture interweave in the film in such a way as to compete amongst each other to finally abrogate the political in favour of the ethical, or vice versa.

12.2 Contextualization and Plot

The town depicted in the film is located in the 'Ribera Alta' of Valencia, an inland region situated 35 kilometres southwest of the city of Valencia. The main sorts of industries in this Spanish region are small and medium ones mainly dedicated to agriculture, textiles, construction equipment, furniture and woodworking. The film focuses on showing the marginality in this area of Valencia by exposing the exploitation of the illegal workers in the furniture factory but also the heterogeneity of the Spanish nation, bringing together marginal women connected through language, religion, social conditions, friendship and motherhood.

The main character is a Cuban woman called Olga. The film offers a circular temporal structure with the opening and closing scenes at Madrid's airport, where Olga arrives and leaves. Her first

and last encounters are with a Spanish policeman to whom she shows her passport. When she arrives she needs to demonstrate she has a 3-month scholarship visa at the University of Valencia. The policeman frowns at her as he understands the document is false, and with a grumpy and patronizing tone warns her not to over-extend her visit. Next time we see Olga, she is already an illegal migrant working all day long in different jobs to survive and to be able to support herself in Spain and her mother and son back in Cuba. On the other hand Mari Jo is a young woman from a poor Valencian suburb. Her elder sister killed her father who abused them and she is now in prison. Mari Jo is also an outcast who works both as a prostitute and as a factory worker without a legal contract in the same factory as Olga and other female Russian migrants. They all earn a third of the minimum legal salary and they often need to hide when the police come randomly to search for illegal workers.

The owner of the factory is a ruthless and miserable middle-aged Spanish woman who is married to Jonny, the factory's manager. He is a Puerto Rican who has a secret sexual affair with Mari Jo. Mari Jo gets pregnant by Jonny but he refuses to have anything to do with her after that. From the beginning he tries ruthlessly to seduce Olga, which characterizes him as a sexual predator from the start. We see him fighting fiercely with the policemen who come to check for illegal workers for example. Eventually, Mari Jo will continue with her pregnancy and with working as a prostitute while she waits for her sister to come out of prison. Finally, Olga cannot cope with the difficulties in Spain and decides to go back to Cuba to be reunited with her mother and son.

12.3 Family, Space and Globalization

Elsaesser affirms that cinema, beyond documenting the consequences of discrimination, and racism, can 'make an audience experience how much self and other, inclusion and exclusion, are intertwined, and dependent on each other' (2011: 6). *Agua con sal* does this to certain extent by primarily focusing on the idea of the collapse or disintegration of the family as a result of the economic system brought by globalization. In this way there is a compelling idea that the disintegration and lack of the family unity and community life seems to be the key element of the unhappiness of the characters. Therefore if the family is restored, the characters will also be happier. Despite the obvious role that the economic system plays, it still seems necessary to concentrate primarily on the restoration of the family at a basic private level, therefore leaving unaddressed issues regarding changes affecting the public sphere and the economic system.

For the migrant characters in the film, Jonny, Olga and the Russian female workers, this family disintegration is created by economic reasons, as they need to migrate to work and earn a living for themselves and for their families back home. For the Spanish characters, family disintegration derives from the irresponsible acts of the fathers or sons immersed in a globalized life that forces them to focus on economic profits instead of social and moral values. Through Olga's moral eyes, the film blames the male characters for the disintegration of the family in the patriarchally organized economic system that the film is depicting. In this society, the Spanish male characters are the ones paying for the women's work. The owner of the bar gives Olga her wages for working in his bar, the male customer consumes in the bar, Mari Jo's clients pay for sex, and the old lady's son pays Olga for looking after his mother. In sum, men in this film are

the consumers and the ones at the top of the economic ladder, thus reflecting how the patriarchal status quo is directly related to the economic order.

The different spaces depicted in the film also serve to highlight the way this economic order affects the lives of all the characters and their family relationships. All appear to be physically or/and emotionally separated from the rest; for example, the bar owner and his heroin-addict daughter, whom he forbids to come into the bar he owns. Mari Jo and her sister are also separated by the prison's visitor glass; Jonny longs for his life and family back home and the old and ill Mexican lady is also a lonely and very unhappy woman whose only son never comes to visit. Olga tries to establish a link with Cuba and re-creates in her flat a 'santería' worship altar as well; as she tries to talk on the phone with her mother and son, however, she is unsuccessful and cannot maintain that communication either with her God or with her family, which will lead her to make the decision of returning to her desired imagined space in Cuba. In this film, the main spaces are the town, including Olga's flat and the bar where she works part-time, the factory, the prison and the imagined spaces of Cuba, Benidorm and Puerto Rico where Olga, Mari Jo and Jonny respectively wish to go.

12.4 The town

Through the spaces in which Olga and the rest of the characters circulate in the town Pérez Rosado portrays globalization processes as detrimental to social well-being. These are the spaces Bauman refers to when he explains that in contemporary cities there are many sites called by the name of 'public spaces' when in fact they do not favour public interaction, and instead they serve to disconnect and separate bodies. In *Agua con sal,* most of the spaces are what Bauman calls 'non-places', or spaces 'devoid of the symbolic expressions of identity, relations and history' like for example motorways, airports or public transport, and affirms that 'never before in the history of the world have non-places occupied so much space' (2000: 102). Through the depiction of these spaces, Pérez Rosado explores how this Valencian town has become inhospitable and meaningless with a lack of public areas where people meet, except for some kind of consumption, like the bar, or for transportation, which is also always needed in the story for economic purposes and never for leisure, as we see Olga in the airport coming from Cuba as a economic migrant, or in the bus, van and the train going to and coming from her various jobs.

Olga's flat is a rented and unhealthy place that, although bought originally by the bar owner for her daughter, is now used by economic migrants with very few resources. When the daughter became a heroin addict, her father threw her out and now she lives in the streets. The flat also serves to create a tension between Olga and her ethical values as she is confronted by the addict girl one night when she is coming back into the train station passageway. While injecting heroin in her leg, the girl says to Olga 'that is my house, it is not yours' (my translation). Next time Olga sees her in the bar she makes sure she is not rejected again by her father and commands him to include her in that space working for him and giving her the place she deserves as his daughter. This young drug addict acts as the excluded who makes herself visible, claiming her rights to a house that she considers hers, and trying to regain the space where she has been excluded due to her addiction. Following Rancière:

> The classical form of political conflict opposes several 'peoples' in one: the people embodied in the State; the one ignored by this law or whose right the State does not recognize and the one that makes its claims in the name of another right that is yet to be inscribed in facts. Consensus is the reduction of these various 'peoples' into a single people identical with the count of a population and its parts, of the interests of a global community and its parts (2010: 189).

Olga acts as the figure embodying Rancière's ethical community, extending her hand to include the excluded back into the social community and sacrificing her own living and working space to give it to this girl, because she believes it is the right thing to do according to her moral values. Once this is done, it is only up to them to continue with the re-bonding that will improve the lives of the father and daughter. It is not clear whether this will be the case, but at least Olga has shown them what is right and what is wrong, and including this girl back in the community appears at first sight to be celebrated by the rest of the characters, as well as by the viewers.

The encounters in the bar nevertheless do not show Spanish people communicating and sharing in any way. The only time some locals are together is at the bar and all are male, looking at the TV screen cheering a football goal. In the bar, only the Russian female migrants are gathered around a table talking, and on one occasion we also see some male migrants singing and playing drums in the night by a fire at the corner close to Olga's street phone box. There are also multiple shots of Olga travelling alone in the train or bus, or in her flat only talking to her worship objects. There is a clear purpose to transmit how the characters are alienated from each other and their environment. Mari Jo alone under grey-walled tunnels in the darkness, and Olga talking at night on the phone to her mother back in Cuba, show how dark and isolated their lives are. In this way, the film portrays a Spanish society that is disintegrating through the shrinking of public space and the isolation of individuals, whereas the migrant characters still seem to have the ability and the need to communicate and share the space with others.

Olga finds the space of the town unbearable because, as Bauman indicates, 'localities losing their meaning-generating and meaning-negotiating capacity are increasingly dependent on sense-giving and interpreting actions which they do not control' (1998: 3). One scene that exemplifies this lack of control is when Olga shouts in anger at her guardian saint for not helping her. Olga has brought with her from Cuba her worship objects, which include her saint-coconut. Olga is a practitioner of Santería, a religious system of Afro-Cuban origin in which each individual worships a personal guardian who, normally taking the form of a coconut, stays close to the person while being provided with gifts like sweets, cigars, and liqueur. In return for these gifts, this saint guardian helps the worshipper with good fortune, strength and health. As we see how Olga is progressively lacking strength due to her lack of good fortune in Spain, she turns to her guardian to find answers, and her frustration is so intense that she blames him for not helping. Her worship rituals, helpful in Cuba, do not seem to have the same powers in Spain. At the beginning of the film we already saw how how the policeman in the airport asked Olga about the strange stones she carried with her in her case. Olga politely explained to him that these were her worship stones. This scene served to describe Olga's otherness as a Santería worshipper, and the fact the policeman does not recognize the objects and finds them bizarre exemplifies the general lack of knowledge of Spaniards with regard to their former colony's culture. Later on, her

otherness will again be reflected when, at the bar, she does not know what a dry Martíni is, reinforcing the idea of Cuba as a space that, due to its political position with regard to the rest of the world, is still not influenced by globalizing forces.

Olga's religious beliefs permeate the narrative from the start. While she is healing Mari Jo's hands with salted water, she tells her about Yemaya, the Queen of the Seas in Santería mythology and also the Goddess of Motherhood and the protector of children. Olga can be understood very much in connection to this religious figure. Indeed, she is portrayed as a human version of this Queen of the Seas, whose colours (white and blue) are also the predominant colours in the film and also the colours of the elements that give the film its title: water and salt. Olga works as the incarnation of the Goddess of Motherhood, helping those who are losing their capacity to be parents, and once her job has been done she goes back to the seas to continue her virtuous labour wherever she is needed, this time back in Cuba with her son. But before she leaves, she goes to the beach and places white rose petals in the sea. According to Yemaya's rituals, this could symbolize Olga offering the roses to the Goddess to receive healing and purification, which she needs in order to go back home after being emotionally wounded by all the negative experiences she has suffered in Spain.

12.5 The Factory

The factory represents how globalization and capitalism damage the lives of the characters, for example, when Olga cannot breath due to the fumes and the dust in the factory, or when Mari Jo's and Olga's blistered hands serve to criticize the terrible working conditions they are enduring. Interestingly, however, the most powerful character in this economic order is a woman, the factory owner, but she adopts stereotypically manly characteristics, for example by wearing dark suits, not using make-up and wearing her hair up. The mise-en scène also contributes to providing this woman with a masculine quality: her office is unwelcoming with unattractive and cold furniture and is also presented as a scenification of the world's economic system, and the big spinning globe by her desk symbolizes the abusive capitalism system that she controls, since her financial power to move in the world also gives her the power to control and abuse Jonny, as well as the rest of the workers in the factory. There is a photo frame of a much older man who could be either her father or her former husband, probably the founder of the factory. She conforms to traditional performativities associated with masculine power, for example in the way she verbally and physically abuses, commands and threatens Jonny, who acts as the bridge between her and the rest of the workers, to whom she never talks. She is also capable of not having to face the police, as Jonny defends the factory like a well-trained dog defending his master's territory. This animalistic quality in Jonny is exemplified when his owner demands sex from behind. This woman's power, wealth and mobility have given her the tools to own the Puerto Rican man, making him her servant/slave, which works for her sexual and financial gain in detriment to his dignity as a human being.

As Jonny remains submissive and eludes any responsibility towards Mari Jo, her baby will most probably grow up without a father as a continuation of her own fatherless life. Jonny is thus also made responsible to a certain extent for that disintegration of the family that the film criticizes, but he appears as a victim of the socio-political and economic situation in both Puerto Rico and

Spain. When he has the opportunity to change his degrading life and take responsibility for his child, he decides to reject Mari Jo and continues to be subordinated in this unhappy, although financially safe, relationship with the factory owner. Bauman affirms, 'security without freedom equals slavery' (2001: 5), therefore, Jonny's choices make him a slave, but these choices are understood as rather problematic because he is in a very difficult position as well.

However, the space of the factory is contested to certain extent, for example, when the Russian migrant sings a Russian lullaby that tells how the toys and the bedtime stories are abandoned in the children's bedrooms. The scene mixes the woman's sad face singing with shots of the factory workers at labour. The power of the sequence relies on the cognitive mapping expressed through the woman's lyrics and face juxtaposed with images and sounds of women at work in the factory, helping the viewer connect the human impact of the economic system at various levels, not only on the women's bodies but also on their emotional states and those of their children left behind. This factory symbolizes the globalized world with the powerful watching from above while the workers suffer below, the economic order that poisons the air and destroys community and family life.

Jonny and Mari Jo also contest the authority of power in the factory when they have sex there. Both of them use this physical intimacy for different reasons, not only because of their mutual and sincere love, but also for their emotional and economic profits. On the one hand, Jonny is using these sexual encounters in the factory space as a contestation to the abuse he suffers from a woman he does not love, and he is using the same type of sexual power his wife uses upon him: she demands sex from him and in exchange she gives him some control over the factory as well as financial stability. On the other hand, Mari Jo is using this sexual power because she has feelings for him, but also because he has promised to secure her a legal contract that will give her financial stability. Sex here is used as economic exchange between human beings who have feelings for each other but who are conditioned by the economic order which does not let them love each other freely. The effect of globalization through their bodies is reflected by the mise-en-scène which exposes the sharp contrast between the warmth of their naked bodies full of life, colour and movement, set against the cold, still, grey, sharp metal machinery where they are making love. Both of them are never seen together in any other place than the factory, and therefore their feelings and physical encounters are restricted and conditioned by this space that symbolises the spatial norms and conditions of the globalized neo-liberal economic order, reflecting in this way how capitalism affects them physically and emotionally.

The effect of the factory on the bodies and minds of the characters is also visible thanks to the use of colour. A grey blue colour is combined with light brown, oppressive, suffocating, impregnated with paint powder and toxic chemicals from the wood treatment that the women spray on the wood pieces. The factory appears as a dangerous space full of toxic fumes and wood dust to which only the workers are exposed, since the owner stays safely upstairs in her fume-free office.

As already mentioned, there is a link between the factory and the prison where Mari Jo visits her sister. The spaces depicted in the film comply with the idea of a space poisoned by lack of freedom and a great deal of separation in human bonds. Bauman refers to Michel Foucault's panoptical model of modern power (1998: 34), where the supervisors hide in the central tower

and wield power over the inmates, with the combination of the full, constant visibility of the inmates and the perpetual invisibility of the supervisors. These ideas transported to the film can help us understand the use of space in the factory, where the owner acts as supervisor with total control and visibility, whereas the inmates or workers are acting under a misty atmosphere created by the toxic fumes and dust powder that blurs their vision, as well as their capacity to actually visualize the owner who has power over all of them.

12.6 Imagined Spaces

Olga and Jonny daydream about different places where they would rather be; these imagined spaces work as a way of resistance against the alienation and suffocation that they suffer in this neo-liberal environment that the factory and the town represent. However, this desire to be somewhere else is not exclusive to the migrant characters in the film, and Mari Jo also imagines herself having paella by the beach on the other side of the mountains in Benidorm, thus offering a cognitive mapping of this other place she wishes to be. She fantasises about this journey and even collects cigarette coupons to claim a travel bag to go there. Olga's landlady tries to keep Mari Jo's L&M bag, and when Olga tries to get it back, she reluctantly gives it to her, saying how much she wishes to be 20 years younger and leave 'this town that does not even have a river' (my translation). This exemplifies that all characters, including the apparently settled Spaniards, wish to escape the space they unwillingly occupy, in search of a different and better place. This travel bag is eventually taken by Olga back to Cuba at the end of the film with a close-up of the L&M printed on it, possibly to imply that capitalism will also arrive in Cuba, or simply to connect both women's dreams in a constructed solidarity. Both places, Cuba and Benidorm, are not generally considered as trouble-free spaces, and so the viewer may imagine both desired spaces as still posing huge challenges and difficulties for the characters, as if there will not be real escape or definite solutions to their problems.

These imagined spaces can be compared to the idea of the 'community' that Bauman describes as what is nowadays another name for paradise lost, as 'it stands for the kind of world which is not, regrettably, available to us – but which we would dearly wish to inhabit and which we hope to repossess' (2001: 3). Olga and Jonny imagine themselves back in this other space where, although they know there are difficulties, they also appreciate it as a better place to be, especially when compared to the place where they are at the moment. They both feel helpless and their unhappiness is related to the fact of being away from their families back in their Caribbean communities. Economic developments in Spain have attracted many migrants, but, as this film tries to denounce, it has also brought a transformation in the way people live their lives in an inhospitable and individualistic society where people are losing their need and capacity to be together under the traditional ethical values that Olga still represents.

It is no coincidence that Rosado chooses Puerto Rico and Cuba as the desired imagined spaces. The film is a Puerto Rican and Spanish co-production and is scripted by a Cuban writer. All these places are well known tourist destinations, but neither of the workers' characters is associated with the pleasureable tourist consumption that these spaces otherwise represent. According to Bauman, '[t]he tourists move because they find the world within their (global) reach irresistibly attractive – the vagabonds move because they find the world within their (local)

reach unbearably inhospitable' (1998: 92-93), and 'the tourists travel because they want to; the vagabonds because they have no other bearable choice' (1998:93). What the imagined spaces come to represent is their problematic ambivalence as they stand for the paradise that has been lost in Spain but that is, despite its lack of financial resources, still more desirable due to the existing morals and community values that continue to exist in both Puerto Rico and Cuba.

This desire of the characters to travel or be somewhere else while feeling unable to do so also illustrates the different ways in which mobility takes place for the wealthy and for the poor. As Bauman states: 'what appears as globalization for some means localization for others; signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate' (1998: 2). This is expressed in the film at various points, one of them being when the factory owner threatens Jonny with sending him back to his village in Puerto Rico if he continues his affair with Mari Jo. He appears terrified by this threat, which shows how much he wishes to stay, reinforcing his wife's power and describing how her freedom of mobility caused by her financial power allows her to own and control Jonny, who symbolises the receiving end of globalization, the fate of the local, the new form of slavery.

Jonny also makes use of cognitive mapping when he shows a picture of his hometown to Olga, expressing what kind of community life he has sacrificed in order to have economic stability. The photo comes from a tourist magazine, but Jonny points at places like the local bakery, the square and his family house, while he explains in tears he feels he has lost everything by migrating to Spain. He shows awareness of what he has gained and also of what he has lost, but does not seem to know what to do to make a change to improve his life. The Spanish man who is always in the bar, noticing his tears and apparent level of alcohol intoxication, says to him 'vete a casa hombre!' ('go home, man', my translation). Since in Spanish 'casa' means 'home' and also 'house' in English, the man is advising Jonny to leave the bar and go back to his home as a solution to his problems, not only because he is too drunk to be in the bar, but rather, because he is too unhappy in Spain. The Spanish customer acts as a moral witness of what has been happening in the bar and has listened to Jonny's story of unfulfilled dreams and loss once he left his home town in Santurce. It appears that going back home is the right thing to do for anybody who knows Jonny's story, but at the same time, Jonny's final decision to stay subordinated to his abusive wife, and his refusal to act responsibly and ethically by taking care of Mari Jo and her unborn child, appears as a punishment, since, despite being advised to act ethically by Olga, he stills denies any responsibility and remains subjected to the economic and emotional power of his wife.

12.7 The Ethical Community in *Agua con sal*

Again, the Caribbean male migrant is the symbol of sexuality and economic dependence on a woman (like Fran in *Flores*). However, Jonny is more a victim here, as he is forced to make a decision between taking responsibility as a father and keeping himself safe. Nevertheless, it can also be argued that Jonny has not got the luxury to act ethically because he is also a victim of a system in which he has been forced to give up love and self-respect in order to survive.

Jonny is in fact charged with blame for his own exclusion, both from the bar and from his right to be a free and happy man with Mari Jo. Similarly, although in a slightly different way, Olga seems to be forced to leave for her own good, since this Spanish society she has found is too degraded for her to cope with. Besides, in trying to restore some of the values she still has in this society, she is also expelling herself from it, and therefore she has to leave to comply with two main aspects: in the first instance, she has to go back to be reunited with her son, and in the other, she has to leave the space that belongs to somebody else who is excluded and that she feels it is her duty to help to include. Bauman explains that:

> Installing and promoting order means performing the job of exclusion directly, by enforcing a special regime upon those meant to be excluded, excluding them by subordinating them to that special regime. Norm, on the other hand (any norm, the norms of the work ethic being just a specimen from a large class) acts indirectly, making the exclusion look more like self-marginalization (1998: 85).

The outcome of the film concludes with the restoration of the order and the norm. Whether exclusion directly or pervaded as self-marginalization, both work towards the consensus that will allow the Spanish factory owner to continue her exploitation and, thanks paradoxically to the migrant Jonny, 'collaboration'. Olga's narrative ending represents a certain degree of resistance to that order, but it does not counteract it. She knows life is difficult back home but she also knows she will be happier, because as she says, unlike in Spain, people still laugh in Cuba. Although Olga's values have positively influenced Mari Jo and the bar owner to continue with their responsibilities as parents, her values are also ineffective in the fight against the violence of the economic order that is destroying the families and the social life in this globalized space. The film does not promote struggle against oppression, it rather accounts for surrender in the face of an economic order that will continue to disconnect and alienate human beings. The film criticizes this order by exposing its failures as being transported into the characters' lives, but does not offer an alternative solution to fight it, apart from leaving it and moving somewhere else free from the pollution of globalization. Indeed, Olga leaves with a smile on her face, which implies she is victorious, as opposed to the nerves and the scared face she showed at the beginning when she arrived in Spain. In this way, her victorious face implies she is going back to a place where the consequences of globalization have not yet arrived.

Both women leave the factory, they both seem to choose what they want to do; Olga goes back and her transformation is exemplified by the way she talks to the policeman at the airport. He looks at her passport and, surprised, says to her that her visa expired months ago, and Olga then answers 'Do you want me to stay?' as if she is now the one in power to decide what she wants to

do. She carries with her Mari Jo's tobacco sponsored bag (L&M). This is an item designed to serve those tourists wandering through global spaces, but this bag is serving women who are anything but tourists. Moreover, the close-up shot of the bag when Olga is leaving Spain is ambivalent: on the one hand, the solidarity between the two women, one emotionally helping the other to go back to a better place (her home town in Cuba), and, on the other hand, it can also suggest the way the director wants to draw attention to the fact that, although travelling is indeed a very different experience for habitants of the First and Second Worlds, there are still people in the First World who are in as much of a precarious state, probably even more to some degree in certain aspects, as those in Second or Third World countries. As Bauman states, globalization 'is the intractable fate of the world, an irreversible process' (1998: 1), and this is what *Agua con sal* comes to convey, the lack of power to imagine a different world since it is immersed in an irreversible path.

Agua con sal presents a consensual ethical point of view in a desirable ethical community as the best and only possible solution to the tensions and difficulties of the characters, but it is impossible for the merely ethical to have an impact on the political: as this analysis shows, the political sphere of the community depicted in the film is left untouched, and therefore Olga's ethical and moral values have hardly accounted for any political changes in this town. Although *Agua con sal* tries to place nationals and migrants on equal ground as victims of the economic system that oppresses and destroys them, it does not provide a dissensual way to break or alter their circumstances. The somehow happy ending involves Olga returning to Cuba as the best possible outcome for her just because, even though Cuba is poorer, it is still an unspoilt and better place to live after all.

12.8 Conclusion

The characters in *Agua con sal* do not find the necessary amount of strength at any level to rebel against the globalizing and capitalist forces that are clearly presented as the cause of their tensions and difficulties in a progressively atomized and disintegrated space. They are only left to accommodate in favour of the most ethical solution, which involves the re-establishment of family, making this appear as the only possible solution in order to mitigate their problems and sufferings.

The film, then, only counteracts the master narrative of globalization to the extent to which it shows its faults and evils, and their consequences in the human lives and bodies of the characters. It shows an undesirable capitalist society inhabited by marginal characters that do not know how to behave ethically anymore. Only the arrival of Olga will contribute to making a positive impact on their lives, but this is only dealt with at a private level. The film fails to imagine a different community to the one that already exists. The solution that Pérez Rosado seems to transmit is that in the face of the economic developments, the only possible way for the individual to cope with it is to act ethically and to strengthen family bonds, foregoing any solutions at a political or economic level.

The film is thus an exemplification of the soft ethics that Rancière describes in his account of the Ethical Turn. While the primary goal of the film is ethical, the political is made absent, which suggests that there is no political agency left for the marginal individual subject to counteract

contemporary forms of economic and political powers that pose a terrible threat to his/her existence. The community in *Agua con sal* ends up as an ethical community governed by the consensual ethical code that Olga re-establishes. In sum, *Agua con sal* only offers solutions at a personal or private level while it foregoes any political or public engagement, even at times when there are spaces and power-relations that need to be disrupted and re-negotiated.

13. Morocco, Spain and the Ethical Turn in *Retorno a Hansala* (Chus Gutiérrez, 2008)

13.1 Introduction

In this analysis I will explore the extent to which the road movie *Retorno a Hansala* contests stereotypical portrayals of Moroccan characters in Spanish cinema and whether the film succeeds in invoking a certain redistribution of the sensible (in Rancière's terms), offering a political input that could help modify the historically conflictive relationship between Moroccans and Spaniards.

In Rancière's terms, I argue that consensus in this film is only partially disrupted inasmuch as it takes the viewer to the migrants' place of origin to gain a better understanding of how and why Moroccan migrants leave their country, risking their lives in the attempt to get to Spain. There is not, however, a vision of the migratory experience through the eyes of the migrant, despite the initial scene where one could expect that the gaze would be that of the migrant.

The story develops in such a way as to describe how a man in Spain who was about to lose everything, including his family and business, finds a way to keep everything and get more, all thanks to his journey to Morocco. There he discovers a new way of understanding himself and others. The change is therefore materialized at a personal level, in other words at the level of the private, but even though the film may intend to extend this personal development and raise it up to the public level, it fails to do so to any great extent due to the lack of multifocalization. Moroccan characters are placed at a secondary level with regard to the main Spanish character, whose personal development they facilitate. The Moroccan characters act to contribute to making his journey a successful process of self-discovery and change of mentality. This change in his relationship with Moroccans is represented by placing ethics at the centre of the relationship between the two sides.

With regard to this, Rancière refers to the 'Ethical Turn' as the tendency that nowadays exists 'to submit politics and art to moral judgments about the validity of their principles and the consequences of their practices' (2010: 184). The problem with this practice is that the right thing to do becomes the norm and it comes to signify the law for everybody, and therefore those in power decide what is the norm and establish what is right or wrong. As they start with the premise that everybody is considered equal and included, this norm or law does not need to be challenged. The problem with this is that, under these circumstances, any need to challenge or combat inequality or injustice is obliterated, given that we all are structured on the basis of the same ideas and values.

In the case of *Retorno a Hansala,* the transformation that the male protagonist underogoes, and which involves a more ethical business with Morocco, becomes the right thing to do because it implies that this more ethical approach will benefit both sides, the Spanish Martín's business and the Moroccans. But the basis of the business still resides in the deaths that illegal migration causes, and more importantly, this change of approach only involves more reasonable prices to

return the dead bodies, and therefore does nothing to challenge the border regime or the economic system.

In my view, the film tries to promote ethical values as enacted by private individuals without addressing the actual political problematic that is brought upon Africans through immigration laws. The message that *Retorno a Hansala* offers is that, given that immigration will continue and deaths in the sea along with it, the best and only thing to do is to try to sympathise with the Moroccan migrant and behave ethically towards him/her but always within the context of the status quo.

13.2 Contextualization: Morocco and Spain

13.2.1 The Border/The Strait of Gibraltar

Africans hoping to make a life in Spain regularly attempt to cross the narrow Strait of Gibraltar into Spain or to jump the fence that separates Morocco from the Spanish autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla in Africa. As Stickle explains, the Strait is both 'an obstacle that separates' and 'a passageway that unites', but either way it 'is a platform from which countless migrants launch their expectations for a better life, creating an unrelenting current of unforeseeable change' (2010: 54). But this route, although the shortest, is also very dangerous, particularly due to strong currents. Despite the danger, many migrants take the opportunity to tempt fate 'crossing the strait for the sake of a dream for a better future' (2010: 55). According to Carling, most deaths here are drowning accidents, quite often once the vessels are close to the Spanish coast: 'Migrants are ordered to jump out of the boat and swim to the shore, in many cases, they are not able to swim or get caught by currents' (Carling, 2007: 329). But this disgraceful situation is not unique to the Strait of Gibraltar: on the 3rd October 2013, a boat with Eritrean and Somalian migrants sank just a few hundred metres off shore from the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa. It was reported that 360 people died in this incident, which Pope Francis called 'shameful'. Moreover, the electronic early-detection 'wall' has also pushed migrats into making the riskier journey to the Canary Islands.

13.2.2 The Moroccan Migrant

Throughout history, relations between Morocco and Spain have been marked by tensions, conflicts and wars, starting with the end of the Arab-Muslim presence in Spain with the Fall of Granada in 1492, through the War of Tetouan in 1859 and then throughout the twentieth century in various conflicts, one of the most recent being the Parsley Island Conflict in 2002. Moroccans have been traditionally considered the enemies of Christian Spain.They have been characterized as 'Moors' and identified with the Arab and Berber Muslims who conquered the Iberian Peninsula in 711 and converted it to Islam. As Daniela Flesler affirms, Moroccans embody 'one of the clearest historical markers of Spanish "difference" in Europe' (2004: 104). Possibly due to all this, of all migrant groups, Moroccans have experienced the worst reception by Spaniards since Africans and North Africans started to migrate in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s.

According to Flesler, Moroccans are the group of migrants most directly implicated in 'the question of Spanish identity in relationship to Africa' (2004: 104).

As Sciolino (2004) affirms, the suicide bombings in Casablanca in 2003 and the Madrid attacks in 2004 have led to Europe seeing Moroccan groups as central to the terrorist threat in Europe. Therefore, as Flesler explains, it is not surprising that their representation as migrant characters in Spanish cultural productions has focused not so much on the migrant's life and experiences but rather on Spaniards' anxieties and reactions towards the newcomers, especially due to their liminal location on the African/European border.

13.2.3 The African migrant in Spanish Cinema

In the 1990s, with the arrival of migrants from Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, films started to expose and criticize the xenophobia and neo-racism that migrants were suffering when arriving in the country. According to Ballesteros, these films often showed the perspective of the Spanish citizen and viewer at the same time as they exposed different discriminatory attitudes towards migrants.

Most films about immigration in this period devoted their attention to the representation of male black African characters. The first of these films was *Las cartas de Alou /Alou's Letters* (Montxo Armendáriz, 1990). This is also the first film totally devoted to African migrants crossing the Strait of Gibraltar in vessels and suffering miserable conditions and discrimination upon their arrival in Spain. According to Ballesteros, the director gives Alou, a black migrant, the narrative voice and the gaze, since we learn about Alou's journey and experiences from his letters, which, in Ballesteros view, 'deconstruct the stereotype of the illiterate migrant, and also denote Alou's dominance of various narrative registers, carefully filtering the information, depending on to whom they are addressed' (2001: 219). In this film Moncet, a Maghrebian migrant, becomes Alou's best friend and his character also helps to extend the social critique in the film to the situation of the Maghrebian community in Spain for the first time.

As far as Maghrebian characters are concerned, Navarro points out how they have mostly had secondary roles, being typically portrayed as illegal poor workers, as in *Tocando fondo/Lowest point* (José Luis Cuerda, 1993), in the comic character Mohamed (known as 'moromierda'/ 'shitmoor' my translation) in *Makinavaja 1* (1992) and *Makinavaja 2* (1993) by Carlos Suárez, in the Moroccan migrant Jalid in *El penalti más largo del mundo/The Longest Penalty in the World* (Roberto García Santiago, 2005), and in Dan, the Maghrebían migrant who works in the pharmacy in *París-Tombuctú* (Luís García Berlanga, 1999), and who is used by a woman to satisfy her sexual desires. There are also five feature films where Maghrebian characters play a more relevant role: *Susanna* (Antonio Chabarrías, 1995), *Saïd* (Llorenç Soler, 1998), *Canícula* (Álvaro García-Capelo, 2001) and *Poniente* (Chus Gutiérrez, 2002). For Navarro, these films seek to move the viewer against racism, trying to humanize the migrant and making racist behaviours more easily understood as unfair behaviours (2009: 348), and they share the common depiction of the Moroccan migrant suffering racism and xenophobia in Spanish society, mainly due to 'the fear of the "other"' (2009: 340). However, Navarro explains that despite the initial good intentions of these films, it can be clearly seen that they portray stereotypes, which are part

of the Spanish 'collective imaginarium' associated with the 'Moor'. For Navarro, these conventions are observed through racist, ethnocentric and paternalistic comments, but more especially through the use of stereotyped characters (2009: 359).

In Navarro's opinion, Spanish cinema has mainly dealt with how Moroccan characters are received and treated in Spain, mostly arriving in 'pateras', suffering hardship and becoming victims of a society that rejects and neglects them. Navarro also highlights the fact that there are hardly any portrayals of those Moroccans who have been living in the country for decades now, children who have transformed the social landscape of schools and quarters in towns and cities, children and teenagers who were born in Spain and who are not migrants now. They have not been given a voice and a visibility in Spanish cinema yet.

13.3 *Retorno a Hansala*, Plot and Contextualization

With this film Gutiérrez innovates in themes, spaces and characters when compared to the previous Spanish films representing Moroccan migrants. Moroccan/Spanish actress Farah Ahmed plays the main female role (Leila) and another important novelty of the film is its focus on taking the story to the migrants' rural homeland. The film starts and ends in Spain but most of the action takes place in Morocco. The main aim of this could be the filmmaker's interest in offering an insight into the subject of immigration from a different spatial and narrative perspective from the ones that all those other filmmakers have based their immigration stories on. This film is, then, very interesting for my analysis, since for the first time I can explore the way that the representation of the migrants' homes, lives and experiences are established, and how this depiction is carried out in connection with the lives and experiences of the Spanish man who visits them. The importance of this journey resides in how this representation of the Spanish and the Moroccan being together on Moroccan land can add to a greater disruption of stereotypes and traditional conventions that can, in turn, contribute to the staging of scenes of dissensus and a redistribution of the sensible.

Chus Gutiérrez visited Hansala in 2006 for the first time and was affected by the locals' way of living. She found an extremely hospitable village with very few resources. The importance of this film analysis resides, then, mainly in the way the filmmaker portrays this other culture, this other space that, to start with, is as alien to her as it is to the main Spanish character, Martín. How she was impacted on that first visit is reflected in the way that Martín reacts to his first visit too, and this is probably the main aim of Gutiérrez: to make the viewer participate in her own experience through Martín. The problem with this is that the experience of going back to Hansala should have been based on and carried out by the need to focus for the first time on the migrant's point of view. However, instead of focusing on Moroccan culture and its inhabitants, the story is boiled down to how a Spanish character deals and copes with this learning process and the output which emerges from it, which, as I will demonstrate, narrows and simplifies the scope of political contestation and disruption in the representation of Moroccan migrants and their homeland and culture, particularly with regard to Spain.

The title means a return to the place where one once was. It implies the return home for Leila and her dead brother Rachid, and also the return home for Martín. The title could also determine

the return to a system of ethical values and social and family bonds that have been somehow lost in Spanish society over the years, possibly due to economic developments. In this way, Hansala is idealized to some extent as the remains of the desirable community life that still exists in Moroccan culture and from which Spanish people should learn.

In the village of Hansala, an event occurred in 2001 that is very similar to the one that Chus Gutiérrez tells us about. At the beginning of this decade, on the south coast of Spain, the bodies of eleven young men washed up on the beach. Apparently, they had crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in a small boat with the intention of entering Spain in search of a better future. It was discovered from their clothing that they all originated from the same village, Hansala.

The film primarily tells the story of Martín, a Spanish man, owner of a funeral business who, after being informed of the drowning of several young men, drives quickly to the scene of the event. He finds a phone number in the hand of one of the dead boys (Rachid) who have drowned trying to get illegally to Spain from Morocco. This is how he meets Leila, the sister of the dead young man who lives in Spain and who also crossed the Strait in a patera five years ago. Martín offers to take Rachid's body back to Hansala, in the area of Beni Mellal, so Leila's parents can bury him. He offers Leila the price of 3,300 euros and she gives him half of this, promising him that she will pay the rest upon their arrival in Hansala. Martín sees the opportunity to make profit by travelling with her back to Morocco, where he intends to take the other young men's clothes for their parents to be able to identify them and pay to have them returned for burial at home. Eventually, this travelling experience makes Martín reconsider his position with regard to migrants and changes his company into a more ethical and less abusive business.

The film gives testimony to one of the tragedies occurring so frequently on the coast of Spain during the last decade. It starts with the sea surface from the point of view of somebody who is drowning. This focalization dramatically changes throughout the rest of the film, since the story will be understood from the perspective of Martín, the film foregrounding his gaze as the one guiding the viewer from now on. There are, however, new elements in this film compared to previous works representing Moroccan characters. The film takes us back to the places of origin and explores in more detail the reasons why the young men feel the need to abandon their homes and cross the Straits, risking their lives, searching for a better life. In particular, the film takes us to the isolated village of Hansala, a place lost in the mountains where food and space are collectively shared. Its inhabitants are Berbers, and they live in the most extreme poverty and institutional abandonment, without electricity or water. Here, people survive through mutual support and deep community bonds.

However, the film rests with Martín and his internal change towards his own life and towards his appreciation of some important aspects of Moroccan culture, such as the sense of hospitality, solidarity, and the respect for religious traditions like Ramadan. The main focus of the story is then based on the Spanish character and how his journey to Hansala helps him discover himself, giving him the necessary power to cope with a life that is breaking into pieces. He is separated from his wife who is soon moving away, taking their daughter Clara with her. Also, his business is at risk of being seized by the bank for not paying the monthly instalments of the mortgage. Martín sees the opportunity to make money from the tragedy by taking the bodies back to

Morocco, but his journey there will transform his views towards Moroccans and will provide him with an alternative family, since his own is on the verge of disintegration.

During his stay in Hansala, Martín meets Said, the youngest boy of a family who dreams about moving to Spain and coming back with a car 'not full of clothes of dead men but with a car full of presents' (my translation). Said speaks some Spanish and shares with Martín a passion for football, wearing the jersey of the Real Madrid football team. He is clearly familiar with Spanish culture and shows eagerness to learn new Spanish words, unlike Martín who 'makes virtually no attempt to learn Arabic' (Deveny, 2012: 76).

Said asks Martín to take him to Spain hiding between the wheels of his car. Martín refuses to do this, explaining to him that it is too dangerous and would cause them serious trouble. The way Martín reacts can be understood as paternalistic, since he is deciding what is best for Said from a position of superiority, and is also considering himself responsible for the boy's future once he has left on his own to cross the Strait in a vessel during the night. His emotional attachment to Said becomes more profound once he learns that Said is in danger, and he feels great remorse and suffering about the possibility of Said drowning in the sea like Rachid. Leila tells him to stop feeling guilty, because, for Said, as for the others, leaving Morocco is the only option for a possible future and with his help or not he would have done it anyway. As Leila says 'nobody wants to live here, without electricity, water or dreams' (my translation).

The next day, Martín arrives in Spain and is relieved to find that no dead bodies in his mortuary are wearing a Real Madrid shirt, the shirt that Said was wearing the night he crossed the Strait. That night, Said comes to find Martín and they embrace each other with great happiness, which symbolizes a new start in life for both of them, each being part of the life of the other. Thanks to Leila and to his journey to Hansala, Martín becomes a more determined man with a more developed sense of respect towards himself and towards Moroccan people and culture. Once he has seen what the lives of the dead boys really were and gets closer to their families and backgrounds, he undergoes a transformation that makes him change his business approach into a more ethical one. In sum, he becomes a better human being only by charging more reasonable prices to the dead migrants' families.

13.4 *Return to Hansala* and the Road Movie

The genre chosen by Gutiérrez to tell this story, 'the road movie', can be understood as the mode to express the transformation and the fluidity experienced by a human being when travelling away from the space that he/she knows and encountering the 'other'. As Wendy Everett states, 'the road movie makes a vital contribution to our understanding of contemporary identities and the contemporary world because it examines the relationship between the traveller and spectator, vision and understanding and time and space' (2009: 173). However, the male protagonist in *Retorno a Hansala* is the only one who is subjected to these changes, and this journey of self-knowledge and of a better understanding of Moroccan culture and its inhabitants and migrants comes only from his own point of view.

The linear road movie structure helps the viewer follow Martín's progressive change in attitude towards the 'other', but the 'other' continues to work as an additional, accessory and secondary force that completes and reinforces Martín's development. The story would have been different if the driver had been Leila and the point of view had been hers or even Rachid's. That journey, then, could have also been an exploration of the transformation from one space to the other, not only in terms of physical change, but also in terms of an emotional and spiritual one, for both the Moroccan and for the Spaniard. Everett offers a comparative analysis of the European road movie as opposed to the American version, and describes the former as a genre that is mainly concerned with questions of identity and:

> [i]ts ability to represent postmodern identity as essentially fluid and migratory, as an on-going process that is both constructed and articulated through our individual (and shared) temporal and spatial journeys, and by the stories we tell ourselves (2009: 166).

The European road movie structure of *Return to Hansala* enables Gutiérrez both to destabilize the identity of the male Spanish character, and also, later, to empower him as the protagonist of his own journey of self-discovery. Thus, and following Everett's account of Corrigan's 'four main criteria of the road movie' (2000: 63), we can state that *Retorno a Hansala* complies with these criteria as 'it reflects the breakdown of the family unit, and articulates the destabilization of male subjectivity and masculine empowerment; its protagonist is entirely at the mercy of the events which take place along the road, and are generally menacing and materially assertive' (2000: 63). The destabilization and breakdown of the family unit occur in the film at the beginning but, as the story moves on, Martín manages to stabilize his power and create a new family unit, as we can see in the scenes when he is driving with Leila and Said sitting next to him in the car. The repeated image of the three sitting in the front of the car foregrounds the image of a family unit that increasingly takes strength as days go by and they share their time together. This bonding taking place between man, woman and boy is clearly opposed to the destabilization and disintegration of Martín's Spanish family.

When Martín arrives in Morocco, he is stopped at the border by the police officers because he has not got the necessary administrative documents to transport a corpse into Morocco. Martín's frustration may be understood as the same one that migrants may experience when they try to cross a border without the necessary legal requirements. However, Martín, while waiting for the document to arrive, goes to spend the night in what seems to be quite a luxurious hotel, with a bowl of soup. While he is not impressed and is quite annoyed by the lack of food resources due to Ramadan, we do not see where Leila is and what experience she is having the first night she is in her home country.

Later, when Martín and Leila begin the journey by car along the solitary, dark road, they are robbed by two men, who take the car and leave them without anything in the middle of nowhere. Luckily, they find it soon after and they are both relieved when they see that the coffin with Rachid's body, the other drowned men's clothes and the money are still in the car. Despite the difficulties and the initial loss of the vehicle with everything they have inside, they manage to find it with only damage to the windscreen.

In the road movie, as Everett argues, 'the key signifier is the car; it assumes growing significance for the protagonist, for whom it represents a sense of male identity, which is bound up with its sttus as object combining technology and modernity' (2000: 63). Again, the relationship between Martín and his car is an example of how, despite the difficulties he encounters, he manages to recover it and mend it. For this, he acknowledges the help of Said and the garage owner because, as he says to Leila, 'we did it' (my translation), and he includes the other men as well as himself to imply that the car has been repaired thanks to the joint effort of him and Said. But Said does not appear in this scene and it is obvious that he has not paid for it; he has only acted as translator between Martín and the mechanic. Therefore, Martín seems to work against the difficulties he encounters and succeed in spite of, or with little help from, those surrounding him.

According to Everett, European road movies are inevitably open-ended (2009: 171) and we observe this at the end of the film, with Martín and Leila gazing at the horizon that shows Africa and a future of hope and new possibilities. Martín now proposes to Leila that they work together in a business that can take the bodies of the dead men back to Morocco, but with more affordable prices for the families. Leila does not give a concrete answer and only says 'I will think about it' (my translation). As a road movie the end is open and also offers the idea of Leila being in charge of her own future and decisions. Nevertheless, her face reveals she has feelings for Martín and the most probable outcome is that they will become a team in a joint venture that unites them as it unites Spain and Morocco.

The last scene shows the landscape of both sides, Spain and Morocco, with the sea in the middle. On the Spanish side, Leila and Martín are sitting, Leila with her legs towards Africa and the man with his legs towards Spain in a clear attempt to visualize both characters as connected to each other at the same time that they are connecting both continents. The countries' proximity is further highlighted when Leila says 'I can see Africa'. This last sentence creates the sense of a emergent or growing proximity between the two continents. Gutiérrez tries to bring Africa closer to the viewer as it is now closer to Martín, but this sentence is also telling of how Leila looks and reflects on Africa, this time from a different geographical position. Now she is looking from Spain, wearing her Spanish clothes and with her hair down, which makes Morocco seem visually close but somehow distant, since now we are being directed towards Martín and his future. Apart from her looks and her feelings for Martín, she is basically the same woman who started the journey. Leila's transformation is minimal and secondary to the much more relevant and significant transformation experienced by Martín.

The seawater with both pieces of land at each side remains at the centre of the image, but both characters are last seen on the Spanish side, which still remains the closest side to the viewer. The water in the middle that divides and unites both countries is still perceived from the Spanish perspective. That sea and the Spanish coast are seen in a totally different way at the beginning of the film. The dangerous sea with the bleak coast that appears in the first scene is now a quiet and peaceful landscape of water in perfect harmony with the two characters, who sit comfortably looking at it, with the Moroccan coast on the other side. The initial chaos at the beginning of the film (chaos for migrants as well as for Martín) has become now a peaceful image that offers a brighter future, although this future seems more obvious for Martín than for anybody else in the film.

13.5 The 'Bare Life' of the African Migrant

Taking into account Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'Bare Life', the initial scene, which coincides with the credits and offers the view of the Spanish coast from the perspective of a drowning man, highlights two main factors. The first one offers the possibility of addressing the issue of human life and its political rights, while the other exposes how this possibility is thwarted by not following the representation of these migrants' 'Bare Life' through the story and simply offering it just at the very beginning. The film offers images of young, lifeless bodies spread across the sand of the beach. These images are often shown in daily news reports, so it can be argued that there has been a process of inurement or desensitization on the part of the Spanish spectator, who over the years has perhaps become used to images of many migrants, dead or alive, being rescued by Spanish police and medical services on the coasts of Spain.

Lechte and Newman refer to the necessity to address crucial issues regarding human rights and how they indicate the relationship 'between the principle of universal human rights and that of state sovereignty as well as the continual reduction of human rights to biopolitical humanitarianism' (2012: 523). Lechte and Newman then recognize 'that "thinking the human" is the first step in a process that must include rethinking community, equality, politics and justice' (Ibid.) They take as basic concepts for their discussions Agamben's and Arendt's theories. 'Agamben sees contemporary politics being intimately related to the category that Arendt sidelines – *zoë*, which Agambem interprets as "bare life" (2012: 524). Lechte and Newman do not say that for Agamben 'bare life' exists as a reality, but that 'political power, as it is articulated today, acts as though there were such a reality'. In other words, '"bare life" is part of a "way of governing"' (2012: 529). This 'way of governing' is materialized visually through the initial scene of the migrant struggling to keep above the water and failing to survive. What he has left in that struggle is his 'bare life': he represents the human life who is deprived of human rights, and his 'bare life' is the result of other powerful men's politics and actions, for instance, European countries' entry requirements, the surveillance systems in the waters of the Strait of Gibraltar and the border controls that try to prevent or restrict undesired immigration to what they consider to be their national territories.

However, the film also draws on the political abandonment and lack of resources that the migrant suffers in his/her homeland and offers it as the main reason why the young Moroccan migrant leaves the country searching for a better life in Spain. In order to better understand this point, I refer to Ewa Ziarek's distinction between 'Bare Life' and zoë: 'Bare Life—wounded, expendable, and endangered—is not the same as biological zoë, but rather it is the remainder of the destroyed political bios' (2008: 90). Indeed, this destroyed political bios is the 'Bare Life' of the men and women crossing the sea in 'pateras', risking their lives and on many occasions dying in the attempt.

That political bios is returned to the migrant as far as he or she becomes a political subject with a voice and a visibility. This happens when the Moroccan migrant is drowning in the initial scene. His 'Bare Life' also works to restore his destroyed political bios, the same political bios that by being destroyed left him with his 'Bare Life'. By this, the redistribution of the sensible is achieved, by representing how the migrants' life becomes 'Bare Life'; he is enacting his political bios. As Rancière argues, by showing and knowing what rights one does not have, one has them,

and with this scene the migrant's political bios is reclaimed. Unfortunately, this redistribution of the sensible does not continue for the rest of the film, at least not with the same necessary political emphasis and intensity.

The man who is losing his life in the middle of the sea can be understood as the stateless man that Agamben refers to when he describes the Homo Sacer of the ancient Roman Law. As Purakayastha and Samay Das explain, for Agamben, the Homo Sacer is someone 'from whom the state has withdrawn all protections which the state usually provides to its bonafide citizens' (2012: 118). The Homo Sacer is then removed from his/her basic rights, and although the Roman law does not directly allow the state to kill the Homo Sacer, indirectly the state does not prevent anybody from killing or prosecuting the Homo Sacer, who is thus subject to Bare Life or 'a life of mere unprotected existence which may get terminated at any time' (2012: 118).

As Purakayastha and Samay Das also recall, 'The Agambenian doctrine of Homo Sacer and resistance of Bare Life is crucial in today's context when human rights issues and civil society movements are on the rise' (2012: 119). Agamben refers to examples of human rights violations in the name of democracy' like Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib (2012: 119), and he feels that in this 'state-sponsored terrorism the Homo Sacer's only option is that of resistance through Bare Life' (2012: 119). For Agamben, such forms of resistance are inoperativity or the potentiality of the Bare Life' and this inoperativity for him means a willful 'resistance in the face of coercion, resistance by the dissident whose life has been reduced to a Bare Life by the state or by power centres', in this situation 'the dissident is left with the only way forward, which is to render the existing power structure inoperative, and Agamben feels that these forces of inoperativity and potentialities would usher in the coming community,' which for Agamben 'signifies a constant vigilantism and process of resistance where all forms of coercion can be thwarted' (2012: 119)

With regard to this initial scene, the film is in a way empowering the migrant not just with human life but also with political contestation. The argument this analysis will carry forward will be based on how the rest of the film swings into a depoliticization of the migrant by conferring on the deceased men the status of leverage, reducing their significance to a mere transaction or commodity for the Spanish businessman. The narrative, thanks to Rancière 'The Ethical Turn', guarantees this transaction. The commodification of the Moroccans' corpses is justified on the basis of a more ethical business approach from the Spanish businessman towards Moroccans.

Schaap refers to how for Rancière, 'Arendt depoliticizes human rights in identifying the human with mere life (zoë) and the citizen with the good life (bios politikos) (2011: 22), because in making such a distinction she is removing the 'human' from politics. 'For Rancière "the human" in human rights does not refer to a life deprived of politics. Rather, the human is a litigious name that politicizes the distinction between those who are qualified to participate in politics and those who are not' (Schaap 2011: 22). The dead migrants in this film are somehow removed from their political power once they serve as exchange value for Martín's success as it is guaranteed by an ethical cover that allows him to make profits while remaining a hero. This ethical cover is very much part of Rancière's 'Ethical Turn', making the migrant bodies go from resistance to subjugation with impunity for Martín and the Spanish political system. The Ethical Turn gives the impression that what is right is right for everybody, therefore those in power can and do organize what is to be considered right or wrong, with the false impression that everybody is

considered equal and included, and then there is no need to combat or challenge inequalities or injustice since we all are structured on the basis of the same ideas and values.

The future of Martín's business can also be related to the fact that the global economy crassed and Spain entered into a recession in 2008, the year when the film was released. Thinking of Spain and Morocco as a joint partnership for their mutual benefit is maybe an idea the film intends to transmit as an extension of Martín and Leila's business and domestic partnership. It is also a convenient political move to re-consider the two countries' relationship and establish closer links, since the Spanish economy (symbolized by Martín's mortuary) can also benefit from this co-operation.

13.6 The Geopolitical Aesthetic in *Retorno a Hansala*

In connection with this re-evaluation and re-organization between Morocco and Spain, it is necessary to examine how Gutiérrez represents the geopolitical. For this purpose Fredric Jameson and his work on 'the Geopolitical Aesthetic' proves to be useful to describe how the film tries to establish a different way of perceiving Morocco through a geopolitical aesthetic which could aim at a certain redistribution of the sensible and at redefining the two countries' ways of being together.

Jameson describes 'the disappearance of the specifically national cultures and their replacement, either by a centralized commercial production for world export or by their own mass-produced neo-traditional images' (1995: 3). Jameson also perceives a certain category of film work that emerges due to this process, imbued with what he calls a 'geopolitical aesthetic', that is the deployment of mythic narratives through which filmmakers attempt 'to refashion national allegory into a conceptual instrument for grasping our new being-in-the-world' (1995: 3).

By examining the geopolitical aesthetic of this film, we can examine how and to what extent Gutiérrez offers a certain way of imagining Morocco and its people that is either closely linked to the stereotypes that the Spanish have attached to their cultural imagination, or instead challenges those views in certain ways. The Moroccans in Hansala live in poverty but with a harmonious solidarity and hospitality among themselves and towards others. They all share everything they have, and they all help Leila's parents with money to pay Martín for bringing Rachid's body back. It is unclear, though, where this money comes from. There is no explanation of what kind of activities these men and women do to earn the little money they have, apart from the money that some of their relatives, who migrated to Spain, may be sending them because, as we see in one of the initial scenes, Leila is regularly sending money to her parents from Spain. This depiction aims at combining a picture of Hansala as a mixture of idyll with a certain degree of life struggle, but interestingly the main message that comes out from this combination contributes to a reinforcement of the idea that economically deprived communities still possess the values that more developed countries lack. This community of Hansala does not offer the image of people suffering because of starvation; it seems to be more that their youngsters are bored because there is nothing to do more than running in the mountains and going to fetch the water from a natural and apparently perfectly healthy well. Hansala and its inhabitants appear, then, as a basically content community still unspoiled by consumerism and the life anxieties that the Spanish characters suffer.

Leila's father explains the reasons behind the migration of young men in Hansala. In the men's assembly, he says to Martín, while showing him a photograph of Rachid, that his son left the village because he felt he owed nothing to a government that couldn't pave 9.5 km of road. He also says that a village that loses its youngsters has nothing. As proof of this institutional abandonment, there is a short scene where a mother holding a newborn walks with some difficulty along a partially muddy path, as well as various scenes when the women go to fetch the water with big, yellow plastic bottles to the natural spring. The film does point to the reasons why the men leave the village, but does not offer a straightforward representation of the unbearable living conditions and the more striking difficulties that these men and women suffer.

As the film deals with emotional and geographic transitions, so the geographical itinerary is also a highly spiritual one. Martín is transporting Rachid's corpse but also somehow those of the other drowned men symbolized by their clothes, which Leila takes time to fold and gently look after. Every shirt represents the human being who owned it, but the shirts also represent what has become of those lives, a transaction with an economic value for Martín. However, the fact that Leila and Said help Martín to hang the clothes in the different villages so the families can identify their dead relatives also prevents the viewer from perceiving the clothes as merely a commodity. Leila's way of looking after the men's clothes contributes to the idea of the dead men as spiritual forces that continue to have a place throughout the film. Nevertheless, for Martín they retain the exchange value that they held at the beginning of the journey, despite the fact that Martín becomes closer to Moroccan culture and plans a fairer transaction by reducing the prices for taking the dead migrant men back home to be buried.

At the beginning of the film we see how Gutiérrez uses the human bodies to mark the link between transnational human connection and cultural and physical geography, that is understood through the Spanish character's eyes and experiences and works towards his emotional attraction towards Leila (in a romantic fashion) and to Said (in a father-son bonding sense). Therefore, Martín becomes increasingly emotionally attached to Leila and Said, as he drives and moves around the geographical spaces of Morocco, which are, to a certain extent, romanticized to intensify the idea of this emotional and physical attachment of the Spaniard to Moroccan culture. We see an example of this connection with the geography when Said and Martín are surrounded by mountains and shout their names, which are shouted back by the echo effect. An amused Leila, who likes seeing how Martín connects with Said and his physical environment, attentively witnesses this scene.

Apart from the first scene, the film ceases to be about migrants and immigration to Spain and becomes an analysis of Martín's self-discovery process. The physical, transitional and geographical elements of the film are related to the sole emotional transformation of Martín. We see a scene when Martín is alone, sitting in the night at the centre of the image surrounded by the Moroccan patio walls. Then Leila's mother comes to give him some tea and urges him to look after Leila back in Spain: 'she is alone in your land, look after her' (my translation). In this way, Martín becomes the rightful responsible carer of Leila. The religious celebration of Ramadan is also used in this story to show how Martín's ideology changes along the journey. Ramadan works towards making the new space more alien, exotic and even awkward at the beginning for

Martín. Then the viewer can more easily understand his transformation when his initial lack of interest and ignorance about Ramadan turns into respect.

With Martín at the absolute centre of the story, the film does not account for the emotional journey of Leila or the other Moroccan characters in the film. Therefore it could be said that the film appropriates the image of Morocco for the purpose of seducing Martín, replicating how it seduced the filmmaker when she first visited Hansala. With the intention of transmitting those feelings to the viewer, the film lacks the ability to reproduce an image of Hansala as it is for the people who live there and for those who risk their lives to leave it. This could have facilitated a more equal redistribution of the sensible with the aim of exploring not what Morocco is or can be for Spain but what Morocco is for itself and what Moroccans are for themselves in their native country or elsewhere.

The geopolitical aesthetic that the film offers can be understood in terms of how Martín's change of mentality can be seen as that of the nation by extension, but this does not achieve genuine contestation of the status quo. Morocco is portrayed as economically underdeveloped compared to Spain, but also as having social values that have disappeared in Spain. This comparison between the two societies is particularly stressed by the contrast that Gutiérrez explicitly creates between the Spanish characters, Carmen (Martín's wife) and their daughter Clara, and the Moroccan characters, Leila and Said. While Carmen and Clara seem to have everything that Leila and Said do not have, they do not appear to appreciate it and live empty lives always wanting to acquire things they do not need. On the one hand, Clara is always focused on what she is going to get next: she has a mobile phone and a laptop computer and always asks Martín for money to buy clothes. On the other hand, Said has nothing that Clara has, but he is always giving to Martín everything he can. He buys a lighter for him when he learns that he needs one and he also gives him his time and effort to find the dead migrants' families. He is a humble young man who genuinely likes Martín and wants to go to Spain so he can come back to Hansala and give presents to everybody. His generosity is thus remarkably contrasted with the selfishness of Clara, at the same time as Leila's kindness and ethical values are contrasted sharply with those of Carmen.

Leila and Carmen are very different women with very different backgrounds. The former is presented as a hardworking, loving and calm woman who is grounded and understands what is important in life. The latter seems to live chaotically, always shouting at her daughter, being unfaithful and taking for granted everything she has. She does not appear to be a likeable person and it is impossible to feel empathy for her after we learn she was unfaithful because Martín was working long hours. How both women get their water appears to be the golden thread to help Martín realize what kind of woman he wants to be with. Although Leila seems at ease in Hansala, she also complains about the living conditions that the rest of her community endure, without water, electricity and 'without dreams', in her own words. Leila becomes the embodiment of everything that Carmen is not for Martín anymore. This is shown when, after coming back from Hansala, Martín watches from his car how Carmen is drinking a glass of water that she has just poured from the kitchen tap. When their eyes meet, Martín with a disappointed face drives away, which means he will not go back to Carmen and instead he chooses Leila.

Farah Hamed, a Spanish actress of Moroccan origin, plays the role of Leila. This is the first Spanish film directed by a Spanish female where the Moroccan female migrant is part of the main story, and therefore the way she is depicted can inform on many levels regarding issues that conflate gender with race in this film. With regard to this, it is useful to refer to Judith Butler's account of performativity: For Butler, 'gender proves to be performative' and 'always a doing' (Butler 1990: 24). Even more useful is to refer to how Butler refers to other identities, such as race, as being not what we are but also what we do. Charlotte Chadderton argues that Butler provides a theoretical framework that not only avoids essentialising identities but also theorises the way they are shaped through power (2013: 48). For Butler, identities are discursively constituted and never an essence that comes from within an individual. Butler (1993, 1997, 2004b) argues that identities are constituted on a daily basis through acts and practices that she calls performativity, meaning that gender, race and other identities are not what we are but what we do, acting them out in different ways and in different situations.

As Chadderton argues, Butler's more recent work provides an example of an application of her theories, in this case to race. For Butler, race is produced and reproduced to be perceived as 'fixed' to bodies. Butler explores how lives and bodies are understood, or 'recognised', through racial 'frames'. As Chadderton explains, 'A "frame" in Butlerian terms is a collection of discourses that shapes perception' (2013: 50). The argument Butler gives is that some bodies are recognized as not having the same entitlement to rights as others; for example, the case of the counter-terrorism agenda in the USA helps Butler to explain how racial frames mean non-white people are recognized as threatening, which is seen as justifying an automatic suspicion (Chadderton, 2013: 50).

The ambiguity in the portrayal of Leila can be examined through the lens of Butler's gender/race performativity acts. Leila represents the courage, agency and mobility of a Moroccan migrant woman who challenges patriarchal domination in Muslim society while expressing the pain and the guilt of her brother's death. She offers a picture of the difficulties of living in Hansala for young men and women, but on the other hand, when she is in Hansala she becomes something else. In Morocco, Leila becomes the domesticated woman for her community, the pleading daughter for her father to whom she continuously implores forgiveness, and both the object of desire for Martín and his helper. Therefore, on the one hand she represents female agency and mobility and her rebellion against her father's rules, but on the other, she conforms to the community rules and perfectly adapts to the daily domestic routines of the village once she is there.

Hansala is portrayed as a peaceful and sociable space surrounded by beautiful nature and fresh air. This depiction works towards making Martín feel more attracted to it and consequently more attracted to Leila, since she embodies what this village comes to be for him. Leila becomes part of the landscape that Martín observes and experiences with a mixture of pleasure and caution. It is always through the perspective of the Spanish character that everything that happens in Hansala is understood. This is exemplified by the scene when Leila is having a wash in the morning in a little wooden and plastic cabin. Martín happens to appear and has a short glimpse of Leila's naked body, but when Leila realizes she is being watched, she moves the plastic so he cannot see her. In this way she can be both sensual and virtuous at the same time.

Leila changes in dress and manner depending on the space she occupies. In Spain she wears make-up and her hair down, and her clothes are more Europeanized, with jeans and a corduroy waist-length jacket. In Morocco, Leila undergoes a conscious transformation to comply with the village's norms and expectations. The first sign of this change occurs when they are in the car and she hears Arab music in the radio. Martín watches how she closes her eyes and moves her hands as a dance where she is transporting herself to her true self. Upon her arrival in Hansala, she covers her hair, wears long dresses and behaves differently; her general attitude is softer and she even blushes when she is told that Martín had been watching her while she was sleeping. It could be said that she becomes more feminine and submissive when she is in Hansala but as soon as she arrives in Spain again, her appearance is again Europeanized and she seems to be more independent and determined.

This change in performance has two effects. On the one hand it reflects the transformative nature of identities and how they can easily be performed (or dictated) according to environmental factors. These changes that Leila performs could contest the notion that there is a single, unified essence of Moroccan femininity. This is positive in the sense that Leila's racial and gender frame is not completely fixed but fluid and subject to change depending on the space she is in. On the other hand, this transformation can be understood via the perspective of how it affects her relationship with Martín and Martín's process of discovery. In this case, Leila's adhering to the gender/racial frame of the domesticated Moroccan, sensual and virtuous at the same time, works towards Martín's emotional attachment to her and to Hansala, at the same time that changing into a more European type of woman, when she is back, may confer on her the possibility of blending in more easily with the country's norms and conventions. Futhermore, Leila is potentially more able to help him in his business than Martín's wife is, especially because she is more reliable and mentally stable than the Spanish woman, who still lacks the 'ethics' and moral values that Leila seems to have from her Moroccan upbringing. Leila is also a positive link between Martín and Morocco, and so his business will benefit from Leila's connections to Africa. As it was the case with *Agua con sal,* the community of the economically underdeveloped country signifies the site of a desirable space with fewer economic resources, but richer as far as ethical values are concerned. In the case of Cuba, the country was only reflected through the character Olga, but in *Retorno a Hansala*, there is a process of exploring the other's space to gain a deeper insight into the living conditions and the migrants' reasons for starting their journey.

The element of the disintegrating family in *Agua con sal* is also a major issue in *Retorno a Hansala*. Consumerism, precarious work, and globalized communities and their life pressures have a negative impact on family structures. Martín is losing his old family but is able to gain a new one thanks to his journey to Hansala. Over there he finds again the basis of the ethical life and family structure that will stabilize his personal and professional existence. There is here, then, an echo of the ethical turn, in Rancière's terms, in a consideration of the appreciation of the other's culture as more ethical, so the other can be respected and taken as desirable. What is problematic about this is that this more ethical community embodied in Hansala does not account for a characterization of Morocco as an equal, or at least not at a public level of affairs. It remains, as was the case in *Agua con sal,* a matter of personal life affairs between one community and the other. In sum, the film seeks to promote an image of the poor but noble

Moroccan as opposed to the poor but dangerous Moroccan, without seeking to challenge the economic and polticial relationship between Spain and Morocco.

The political community that Rancière accounts for when he describes the excluded in this community as a conflictual actor who 'includes himself as a supplementary political subject, carrying a right not yet recognized or witnessing an injustice in the existing state of right' (2010: 189) appears in the initial scene and fades away as the story moves on to end up with an 'ethical community'. In this community, Rancière explains that there is no supplement since there is no need for it, because all its members are included. In this case, Leila and Said are perfectly included now in Martín's life and new family structure, establishing a social bond between here and there, Spanish and other, and obliterating the idea of the excluded as the radical other, the one who poses a threat to the Spanish community, the Moroccan who is mainly regarded as alien to Spanish identity values and is often considered in relation to terror.

This film, then, contributes to the idea of the national community that Rancière refers to, a community that includes all its members under the pretence that there is a political harmony. This is what Rancière calls the essence of consensus, which**:**

> does not consist in peaceful discussion and reasonable agreement, as opposed to conflict or violence. Its essence lies in the annulment of dissensus as separation of the sensible from itself, in the nullification of surplus subjects, in the reduction of the people to the sum of the parts of the social body and of the political community to the relations between the interests and aspirations of these different parts. Consensus consists, then, in the reduction of politics to the police. Consensus is the 'end of politics' (2010: 42).

Gutiérrez tries to make the viewer imagine that this harmony can be achieved between Spain and Morocco through the relationship that Martín is now set to construct with Leila and his business, mutually helping each other in perfect and ideal co-operation between the two countries.

13.7 Conclusion

Martín's transformation works at a private level, and there is no political transformation that ensures a different way of understanding Moroccans and Spaniards 'being together', but the way continues to be one about a relationship where Spain stays in a superior position with regard to Moroccan migrants. Therefore, what started out as the promise of a story where the gaze was going to be from the other's side, turns out to be a road movie where the male Spanish character goes on a quest to Morocco, falls in love and discovers himself.

Gutiérrez places ethics at the centre of the cultural understanding and subsequent success between Spain and Morocco. In order to justify this economic transaction, the film uses ethics as mediator since Martín learns with his journey to Hansala how to respect and be more sensitive to the families' grief. But this is still a transaction of bodies for money and it works to provide economic wealth to Martín, while the families in return receive the dead bodies of their loved ones. Despite the film's portrayal of it, this is not an equitable transaction, since Martín's good

intentions in his treatment of the exchange deal still means a loss of lives, which will be used for economic profit.

The political contestation that these lives can offer is thwarted by the film's narrative, which places Martín's life and self-discovery journey at the centre of the story and bases the happy ending on the fact that he can keep everything he was about to lose at the beginning of the film, his daughter, a wife, his business and his self-respect. He achieves all of this again thanks to his journey, which has worked as a cultural bridge between Spain and Morocco at a personal level. He does not set out to start a political movement to change the fate of the migrants crossing the Strait, he only sets out to make a fairer deal with Moroccans when selling them the transportation of their dead sons, and this is the main output of the film, a basically ethical one.

With the end of the film, there is no more need to explore what else can be done or how much more could be contested in the relationship between the two countries. There is no need to look for 'forms of thought aimed at bringing about a radical political and/ or an aesthetic change' (Rancière 2010: 200), because the film's ending resolves the tensions and problems between the Spanish man's ideology with regard to Moroccan migrants, so it is not necessary to go anywhere beyond the ethical to understand what is left to do between the two communities, or what is to be done so that no more men and women drown in the sea trying to reach the Spanish coast.

The relationship that the film establishes between the Moroccan and the Spanish does not correspond to a redistribution of the sensible; instead it complies with the idea of the difference between those who will continue to suffer and those who will continue to benefit from that suffering. Ethics plays the major role in the understanding of this way of being together, which overall halts any possibility of contesting the political as it briefly had done at the beginning with the very first scene.

14. Barcelona, the Precariat and Post-Migration Cinema in *Biutiful* (Alejandro González Iñarritu, 2010)

14.1 Introduction

The following analysis of *Biutiful* points to a shift in the debate about the representation of migrants in Spanish cinema. Twenty years after the first film devoted attention to the phenomenon of immigration in Spain, Mexican director Alejandro González-Iñarritu creates a depiction of Barcelona as a post-migration city where migrants and nationals share the space on equal terms. Unlike most films of this decade, *Biutiful* moves away from expressing the effects of the newcomers' arrival on the host country and does not explore their impact on Spanish national society and identity. Instead it presents what capitalism is doing to the world at a moment when economic migration and social injustice go hand in hand. This is equally the case for the Spanish characters as it is for the migrant ones. The characters in *Biutiful,* mostly locals and all migrants, belong to a new, emergent and growing social group.

In terms of expressing how the characters are represented equally as a group, I am using the term 'precariat', coined by British economist Guy Standing (from 'precarious' and 'proletariat') to describe the new emerging social class with little or no job security, or in Standing's words a 'detached group of socially ill misfits living off the dregs of society' (2011: 8). Uxbal and the rest of the migrant characters in the film are part of this new social group, different to the one that used to live in this area of Barcelona decades ago. This new, emerging and growing class is not part of a proletariat, 'a working class of stabilized labourers' (Standing 2001: 96). Instead many migrants today are 'disposable and with no access to state or enterprise benefits' (2001: 96) as 'migration is growing and changing character in ways that are intensifying insecurities and putting many more into precarious circumstances' (2011: 93).

The film tells the story of Uxbal, a Spanish national and not an immigrant, a father of two who is terminally ill with prostate cancer and makes a living by mediating between Chinese sweatshop co-owners (and lovers) Liwei and Hai, who produce forged designed goods, and Senegalese street vendors like Uxbal's friend Ekweme. Uxbal is also friends with sweatshop worker Lili, who looks after his children, Ana and Mateo, when he is at work, as their mother Marambra suffers from a bipolar condition and alcoholism and is unable to look after them. Uxbal is also able to communicate with the dead and does occasional jobs for families who want to speak with their recently deceased at wakes and funerals. Throughout the film, Uxbal tries to save all the money he can to make sure his children are safe when he dies.

In an effort to challenge the dominant image of Barcelona as the modern model city, the film promotes the idea of Barcelona as a contested space, focusing on the rundown areas of the city where the 'precariat' fights for survival against all odds. In this way, migrants and nationals are all forced to live in constant transit, traversing borders within the city as well as those of countries, in a context of social injustice and economic migration. As Rancière states, most interesting artistic contributions to the framing of a new landscape of the sensible have been artistic propositions focusing on 'matters of space, territories, borders, wastelands and other transient places, matters that are crucial to today's issues of power and community' (2010: 149).

In addition, all of the characters share in the universal journey from life to death. This idea of being in constant transit equalizes them, albeit acknowledging the individual characteristics and circumstances of each one of them.

Iñarritu finds beauty, light and grace in what otherwise would be considered ugly, sombre and depressing. In *Biutiful,* the characters, their space and how they make use of it represent the beauty within human beings and their resilience, as the characters are able to become stronger in the face of adversity to protect their families, although still full of moral contradictions, since all of these fallible characters have their own reasons to behave and act as they do. I argue that the director thereby achieves a redistribution of the sensible, a perception of equality among all the characters who are constrained in different ways by their environment. Iñarritu juxtaposes two worlds in one: the Barcelona of the precariat and the Barcelona of the postcard images appear together and against each other in the Barcelona that the film offers. As Rancière affirms, '[d]issensus does not refer to a conflict of interests, opinions or values, but to the juxtaposition of two forms of the sensory implementation of collective intelligence' (2010: 80).

14.2 The Precariat

Iñarritu transforms the coordinates of perception of Barcelona and redistributes the sensible through a rearrangement of characters and their ways of being together, united mainly by their first common goal, which is keeping their families together and safe. Here almost all the characters are migrants, either from internal immigration from the South of Spain in earlier decades, or from the more recent waves of international economic migrants. Particularly interesting in this film is the portrayal of migrants from China and Senegal. These characters inhabit the suburbs north of the city, Badalona and Santa Coloma de Gramenet, 'areas to which the cinema has never paid much attention' (Deleyto and López, 2012: 159). These characters often speak their own languages, Chinese and Wolof, for which reason Deveny states that *Biutiful* is another example of 'accented cinema' (Deveny, 2012: 126), as it uses different languages, as well as Catalan and Spanish.

As Balibrea explains, the 'Barcelona Model' 'defines what could be called an urban regeneration strategy, that has taken place in the city from the mid-70s onwards and which has been endorsed by urbanists, architects, geographers, sociologists, local politicians and experts in cultural politics in both national and international circles' (2007: 022). It has been described as a model to regenerate specific urban spaces and reinventing them as spaces that will be 'more beautiful, more economically successful and more socially just' (2007: 022). However, this model has received criticism. The main target of critique is, according to Balibrea:

> The culture of consensus and the liquidation of dissent, and within this context, the spatial eradication of a history, and a present of urban conflicts. From a more prosaic perspective, the institutions are accused of having built a model city for those who can afford to enjoy it (2007: 023).

Balibrea's criticism can be related to Rancière's idea of consensus as 'the reduction of democracy to the way of life or ethos of a society – the dwelling and lifestyle of a specific group'

(2010: 72). This is also the group dwelling in the model Barcelona and whose visibility is guaranteed and reinforced by means of expelling those other subjects who do not contribute to the image of Barcelona as a trademark and who need to be kept invisible and displaced to the margins.

The film's title also plays a significant role in challenging political structures of power in Barcelona. *Biutiful* is the phonological spelling of the English word *beautiful* in Spanish. Uxbal spells the word for his daughter Ana, who is doing her English homework and does not know how to write it. Playing with signifier and signified serves to create a new meaning of the word 'beautiful', which is transformed in Uxbal's world and marginal Barcelona into a socio-political device that contests the idea of the beautiful and monumental Barcelona, contrasting it with the Barcelona where Uxbal and the rest of the characters in the film live their lives of precariousness and struggle.

Iñarritu presents the contradictions and contrasts of these two conflictive visions of the city. On the one hand, there is the 'beautiful' Barcelona, the one created for the tourists and for the middle classes, and on the other, there is the less attractive Barcelona, full of economic migrants, prostitutes and outcasts. Iñarritu creates a disruption of the consensual perception of the 'beautiful' city and transforms it into the perception of the 'biutiful' Barcelona in which the real beauty of the city lies. According to Fraser, Iñarritu offers the 'real' Barcelona as opposed to the 'model Barcelona' and foregrounds the 'human costs of spectacular urban modernity' (2012: 21). The film does this by focusing on migrant and marginalized characters throughout the story 'and by largely frustrating the viewer's predictable expectation for glimpses of the city's triumphant and monumental architecture' (2012: 20).

For Rancière politics means 'displacing the limits of the political by re-enacting the equality of each and all (*qua* vanishing condition) of the political' (2010: 54). The dissensual power of the film relies on how Iñarritu portrays the universality of human life as transient, as well as creating a space that belongs to the same group equally. This is the precariat, a group where migrants from different places within or outside Spain become equals. As Guy Standing states:

> [u]niversality is the only principle that can reverse growing inequalities and economic insecurity. It is the only principle that can arrest the spread of means testing, conditionality and paternalistic nudging. It is the only principle that can be used to retain political stability as the world adjusts to the globalization crisis that is leading to a decline in living standards for the majority in the industrialised world (2011: 155).

The fact that Iñarritu chooses Barcelona 'makes it possible to read the struggles of migrant and marginalized characters against the widespread triumphant image of Barcelona as a 'model' European destination city in extra-filmic discourse' (Fraser, 2012: 19). For Fraser, Barcelona poses an intriguing case of polemical conflict over what cities should be, because on the one hand many planners and architects label the 'Barcelona model' a success of urban design, while others see it 'as a product of what Henri Lefebvre has denounced as capitalist modernity's "enthusiastic (triumphant and triumphalist) consciousness"' (cited in Fraser, 2012: 20).

As Jordi Bonet I Martí points out, it is 'precisely the heterogeneity and hybridizing capacity of the urban territory which constitutes one of Barcelona's main immaterial assets' (2007: 038). This attractive aspect of the heterogeneity and hybridizing nature, still very much alive in Barcelona, is clearly exploited by Iñarritu to make this film more politically current and challenging. Furthermore, the ability to reflect on past internal and more recent external migration in Barcelona as being closely connected to the transient nature of this space also helps to create a space that goes beyond any impositions, borders or rules. This relates to what Axel Goodbody asserts, referring to Massey's ideas about how the identity of place must be recognised as always unfixed, contested and multiple, 'like individual and national identity, which come into being over the years through a layering of interconnections with the wider world' (2001: 6). *Biutiful* does this by portraying Barcelona as a place of local, national and global contestation.

14.3 Urban Landscape and Working Class Heritage

The hybridizing nature of Barcelona and its unfixed identity is strengthened by an extensive representation of space-time relations in the city. Past and present merge thanks to the use of the three chimneys of the thermal station of Saint Adriá de Besós. Their image is reflected in the first scenes and then numerous times throughout the film. The first image of the chimneys appears reflected in the street water puddle with the figure of Uxbal walking through it when taking his children to school in the morning. Thus, Uxbal's precariousness is set against the environment that surrounds him and that reflects the post-industrialization as well as the progressive deindustralisation of the city. A short image like this conveys a poignant meaning, since it establishes the connection between the progressive movement of the working class or proletariat structure once symbolized by this building, with the new social and economic reality embodied in Uxbal and the rest of the migrant characters in this city. The puddles, as well as the old buildings filled with damp, are the result of the faulty sewage and construction systems that characterize this area, particularly due to rapid industrialization and the consequent migration flows that led to the speedy construction of homes to cater for the Spanish migrants who rushed to work in the factories of Barcelona in the sixties and the seventies.

The film offers an insight into the contrast between past and present through the use of the chimneys as part of the landscape of this area of Barcelona. The area, once inhabited by a mixed community of Spanish migrants, was built socially and economically thanks to the work that this thermal station provided for them. These southern Spanish migrants fought for their rights and they became an organized and united group, despite their different mentalities and geographical origins. The film offers various images of the three chimneys, which today are a symbol of the Mediterranean coastline. For this reason, the majority of citizens in Saint Adriá have been working towards their protection ever since it was announced that the company Endesa was finishing its activity in the factory in 2007. Eventually the power station ceased all activity in 2011, which explains why at the time of filming, 2010, the chimneys are still throwing smoke up into the air.

The different and more recent reality of Saint Adriá is portrayed in the film by placing together other communities of migrants more culturally and geographically distant but still becoming united in various ways, still fighting for their survival and still having the sight of the same three

chimneys, or 'the three Maries', as their original workers named them, to make them their own. In the same way, nowadays 'the three Maries' belong to the citizens of Saint Adriá who have fought against their demolition. Once the reason for complaints about the black smoke that contaminated and blackened their lungs and houses, the chimneys have now become a symbol of class resistance, because keeping the chimneys was the reason why the locals united against the authorities who intended to bring them down in order to sell the land and construct new flats. These new buildings could have been the beginning of a gentrification process in Saint Adriá. Presently, the 200m tall chimneys have become part of the cultural heritage of the city, but back in the political transition from dictatorship towards democracy, the workers of the station fought for their rights and became a crucial element in the origin of the CCOO union in Catalonia ('Comisiones obreras', the main Spanish union). Deleyto and López, however, argued that the film endorses the idea of Barcelona as a model of the attractive modern global city by emptying the meaning from the city's old buildings, like the power station, and making it part of the official discourse as a symbol of art consumption. For them, this is what the film itself represents, a commodity for the elitist and high art consumers.

As Balibrea states, the current new Barcelona that offers itself to the world as an image of the ideal modern city 'has been built on the ruins of the massive devastation of the social space of production and reproduction of industrial Barcelona, this is mostly factories and working class housing' (2007: 023). This is visualized in the film through the chimneys and Uxbal's neighbourhood, as this is one of the last spaces of this social space of industrial Barcelona that has not yet been devastated, but which is probably on the verge of so being, as has happened with other spaces of the city. The film, then, by showing this area in this light, works towards imagining a different political and urbanistic renovation, a more inclusive one respecting and accounting for its historical, social and political memory.

As Iñarritu himself stated, 'the concept of memories is definitely one of the most important metaphysical and existential questions of this film' (Muñoz 2010). This is clearly expressed through Uxbal, whose main preoccupation is that his children do not forget him when he dies. The fact that he forgot about his father haunts him, and he finds it comforting when he sees him in the cemetery. Being able to look through all the photos and personal objects that the coffin contained helped him connect with his father and also gives Ana and Mateo some memories for them to hold on to. Taking Ana's head in his hands, he tells her 'please, Ana, remember me, do not forget me'. This question of memory can be connected with Spain's 2007 Law of 'Historical Memory', 'which sought to end the "amnesia" surrounding the crimes committed during the Franco regime' (Delgado, 2009: 41). Uxbal's comfort in seeing his father's face and his personal objects evokes the debate that took place in Spain near the time of the filming and that expressed the need to open the mass graves from the Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, it also evokes the working class struggles that took place at that time and sets them up through Uxbal's story, as he represents an extension of this Barcelona and its political identity as part of the precariat. Although Uxbal is not a continuation of what his father once was, a leftist in political exile, he is also suffering social injustice. Metaphorically, he is a child of the socialism that his father's body represents, brought back to the present embalmed, as if to look at it as something well preserved but nonetheless inert. Therefore, the idea of socialism embodied in Uxbal's father and his memories becomes a nostalgic restoration of political ideals, brought back to the world of the living but in remembrance of something already extinct.

14.4 Nature, Religion and Uxbal's Experience in the City

Even though Uxbal is a Spanish national, he is also represented to a great extent as an alien in the city. He does not have a Catalan accent and only uses a few Catalan words at times to create proximity with the constructor or with the sweatshop owner, but he never uses Catalan with his children, which proves that he might not be that familiar with the language.

Another scene exemplifies how Uxbal is portrayed as a migrant body and soul, thanks to the contrast the film makes between the natural migrant spirit of wildlife and the migrant experience due to exclusionary political ideas and practices. Uxbal is walking on a high flyway at dusk and suddenly stops to watch in the sky a flock of migratory birds getting ready for their journey. These birds, like Uxbal himself, are getting ready to set off and leave Barcelona. In this way, Uxbal's transition to death is compared to the migratory birds, which, like human migrants, are forced to be on the move looking for a better place. After looking up to the sky, he is surprised by the sound coming from a car's megaphone. This is a political propagandistic message: 'Catalonia only for Catalans'. Uxbal stares at the car in disbelief, and his expression makes the viewer understand that he is closer to the migrant and the aliens than to the separatist anti-migrant Catalans; he is then, like the migrants, a 'denizen', like the 'undocumented migrants, who have civil rights as human beings but lack economic, social or political rights' (Standing, 2011: 94).

The deployment of Uxbal's proximity to his death, the migratory birds and the political propaganda the car's megaphone is spreading around the city, are combined so as to express the critique of the political forces that work towards the exclusion of human beings who are not welcome to particular places, being considered as not belonging there. Uxbal is leaving due to his illness, and, like the birds, this moving to a different place is due to impelling natural forces that escape all human control. In this way, this scene exposes the universal forces that make humans (and animals) bound to move from one place to the other, crossing all kinds of different boundaries, therefore contesting the idea of an exclusionary world as opposed to a world where all are equally included because the world belongs to all of us, just as it belongs to the birds that move around it without any physical and social restrictions.

The scenes of Uxbal walking in the city take the viewer through a landscape that interconnects identity politics and city through sea life symbols. For example, while Uxbal walks in the city, there is a big graffiti on a wall, a big shark painting with bank notes all over its body and engulfing the signs of the PCC (Catalonian Communist Party) and UGT (General Workers Union). This epitomizes how capitalism, embodied in the predatory shark, destroyed the rights and powers of workers, represented by Uxbal and the rest of the characters living in this marginal area of Barcelona. Uxbal continues walking in front of an electrical goods shop and there are several TV sets screening the same image of sharks in shallow water, making it seem like an aquarium. Also, the sharks are connected to the death of the Chinese migrants, since it is in this shop where the sharks appear on the screens that Uxbal buys the faulty gas heaters causing the death of the sweatshop workers. Again, images of wildlife are used in an artificial and political manner in order to reinforce the idea of the strong and natural bond between

wildlife and humans, since human actions can be related to animal predatory behaviours, just as the big white shark represents the capitalist system that eats and destroys everything around it.

Following the continuity of the point of view of the precariat and their struggles, the viewer can also understand and be part of the transitional dimension of the film and how death is highlighted especially by the film's structure. Uxbal's death transition occurs at the beginning of the film and at the end, making the entire film become a flashback towards it. This structure reinforces the idea of being in transition. *Biutiful* begins with Uxbal talking to a stranger in the woods. The viewer does not know who the stranger is until later when Uxbal's deceased father is exhumed in the cementery and there is a resemblance with that man we see at the beginning of the film. Thus, the viewer himself is placed in a transitional position, forced to interpret the images in connection with Uxbal's impending death.

The absence of sights of nature together with the continuous references to it makes the viewer adopt a stronger sense of the environmental standpoint that the film tries to transmit. The city has transformed its inhabitants' into a sort of fish tank, an artificial space where humans, like fish, can be controlled and observed. All the images of sea life both compensate for and at the same time draws attention to the viewer's lack of visual access to the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, the film offers a politics of representation that is set against the vision of Barcelona as a model city, depicting the progressive lack of contact and experiences between humans and their natural environment in a non-artificial way. In sum, the film offers a disruption of the image of Barcelona by creating a different perception of the relationship between wild nature, urban nature and humans, particularly in a globalized city on the Mediterranean coast that is located less than two hours away from the Pyrenees. We can explore the kinds of images Iñarritu offers of nature that contribute to supporting or disrupting the idea of the Barcelona trademark, thereby contesting the consensual vision of this city as an ideal urban model for the world and reinforcing the idea that the precariat is suffering from environmental degradation through this depiction of the characters' living conditions, and especially through Uxbal's sickness. This reveals Standing's assertion that the precariat now wants:

> control over life, a revival of social solidarity and a sustainable autonomy while rejecting old labourist forms of security and state paternalism. It also wants to see the future secured in an ecological way, with the air clean, pollution in retreat and species revived; the precariat has most to lose from environmental degradation (2011: 155).

Uxbal's sick body is connected to the sick city and its predatory politics and social injustice on various occasions, for example, when the police hit him in his attempt to help his street vendor friend, Ekweme, who is also being hit by policemen after a street persecution. The sequence starts with a view of exclusive designer shops like Ermenegildo Zegna. The Africans selling fake designer goods in the streets see the police and start running and crashing against the people who are sitting in the outdoor bar spaces in Las Ramblas. The fast camera movements help visualize the tension and the clash between the two sides of the same coin, the different worlds existing in a globalized Barcelona. This scene shows the brutal clash of the two worlds that exist in the city and it works as a scene of dissensus, as the viewer stays aligned with the point of view of the precariat. As Rancière states in his Thesis 8, 'the essential work of politics is the configuration of

its own space. It is to make the world of its subjects and its operations seen. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one' (2010: 37).

On the one hand there is the Barcelona of the consumers, the middle classes, sitting comfortably and peacefully and able to afford the globalized market of consumption represented in these exclusive shops, and on the other hand, the Barcelona of the African street vendors of fake copies of these designer products running and trying to escape the police. This violent chase shatters the peace of those who are sitting enjoying a drink outside. Their faces show the shock and distress of this disruption that, although nothing to do with them, is nevertheless affecting them more directly now. The brutality of the police against the Africans and Uxbal culminates in a shot of Uxbal's wet pants showing how his illness is taking control of his body, just as the two policemen are holding and hitting him. In a more symbolic way, this can be read as how the state does not protect, but hits, damages and restricts the lives of those who are most vulnerable. Uxbal's experiences in the city serve to connect the representations of space, the perceived spaces of 'order' imposed on humans (these being the ideas of Barcelona as the city model), with the representational spaces that Iñarritu is creating: a symbolic space that exposes and criticizes the effects of the decisions of planners and bureaucrats as abstract spaces that are not imagined as being lived in, because when these spaces are actually lived in, that 'order' is shattered, revealing its inadequacies and failures.

Larry Ford's general assertion is of great relevance at this point: 'the role of cities in film gradually changed over time from serving as mere background scenery to acting as the equivalent of major characters in many stories' (1994: 119). Bearing these ideas in mind, it is easier to understand how 'Barcelona is undeniably recognizable as the film's co-protagonist, along with Javier Bardem's lead character named Uxbal' (Fraser 2012: 21), as he is also directly connected in opposition to the monumental city in the scene when he is in hospital for his chemotherapy treatment. The camera shows a panoramic view of the Sagrada Familia church and the modern Torre Agbar, symbol of capitalism. Both buildings consensually represent the beautiful and global Barcelona as a unified aesthetic whole. However, Iñarritu transforms this visual and consensual experience by offering this landscape from Uxbal's point of view. As the camera pans to the left we see both images, Uxbal receiving chemotherapy and the panoramic view of the city with its magnificent buildings now transformed into something distant and unattractive.

This view merges together both sides of the city but does not romanticize it or make a pleasurable spectacle of it. In fact, the bleak landscape is rather dark and unattractive with several construction cranes crowding the distant, poorest side of the city. This image, then, links the marginal with the magnificent Barcelona and creates a new view of the city, opposed to the consensual image of Barcelona that separates the 'beautiful' from the 'biutiful' city, as for example in other transnational representations of the city such as Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008), where Bardem is also the main male character. In Allen's film, the transnational urban intellectual middle classes move around Gaudí monuments, sunny streets, designer shops and trendy art forms. As Deleyto and Gómez state, 'Allen's Barcelona comes close to the trademark imagined and promoted by local and regional authorities and by global capital' (2012: 160).

These images of the city from the hospital room encourage us to see the city as 'liquid'. Like fish in a tank, this image conveys the metaphor of the city as at sea. This image connects with a later image of the sea obscured by cranes, similar to the arrangement that we see in this picture. The previous images of blue skies and sea references, with camera movements simulating the sea waves, pervade the images of the city and bring us back to the idea of a city life intimately connected with the oceanic feeling. Closely connected with this idea is the fact that the sea does not contain the Chinese corpses, which are brought out on to the shore. The sea rejects the corpses of the Chinese workers, and therefore the oceanic transcendent feeling and the longing for nature is thwarted again. On one hand, this rejection can be understood as a separation between nature and city, but on the other, it can also be due to the idea of city and sea being one and the same, converging into the same space that is degraded and polluted and cannot contain anything or anyone, just as the city is not successfully containing the precariat. The urban experience is also connected with religion and nature and politics, especially exemplified by this scene when the waves of the Mediterranean sea make the corpses visible to the world, with the TV news making them even more so, as against the invisibility they suffered while hiding in the sweatshop underground.

The idea of the Mediterranean Sea as part of a tactic to make Barcelona an attractive city for tourists and investors is transformed into a symbolic device that confronts that idea. Instead of showing a sea full of boats, sunny beaches and Olympic ports, the Mediterranean sea in *Biutiful* only appears on two occasions, both of them in connection with the death of the Chinese migrants. The symbolic meaning of the sea as pleasure is transformed into danger, fear, work and death. Just before the bodies of the Chinese migrants are seen in the basement, there is a shot of the sea at dawn. The image of the sea is cut across by thin electric towers that seem like pointed knives or swords cutting the sea, as if killing it. Shortly after this, another shot shows the chimneys throwing intense smoke into the air, again anticipating death caused by gas inhalation.

There is a direct contrast between light and darkness symbolizing death and life respectively. Although this is traditionally the other way round, in this film darkness and especially blue colours dominate the screen. In Chinese culture, blue symbolizes immortality while dark blue represents sombre occasions like funerals and deaths. Blue in *Biutiful* serves both purposes: on the one hand, it attaches to the Chinese symbology of immortality and death, and on the other it connects the city with the unbounded, transcendent feeling represented by the sea. However, the atmosphere in the film is surrounded by blue from the start. For example, when Uxbal takes the underground from the hospital where he has had the medical tests, there is a fast shot of a street wall painting of a fishing boat at sea. The little boat is called Amor I Pau, a Catalan name that means Love and Peace. The seagulls of the city fly over the painting, creating a visual effect that foresees the dearth of images of the Mediterranean Sea, but again with a poignant and continuous reference to it. For example, the coffins where the little boys lay dead seem to be blue, and the camera movement resembles the movement of sailing from Uxbal's point of view as if they were in little blue boats in the sea. In this film, the boat seems to become a metaphor of the city that holds humans, all navigating in the sea that is life, with the light above symbolizing death.

The sea, then, acts as a symbolic power conforming to the laws of the universe and not to those of humans. It is nature taking its normal course that unveils a crime and the sins of those who

are responsible for it. This scene is connected to a previous one with an image of the painting Uxbal has over his bed when his illness is getting worse. The painting is a version of Rembrandt's *Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, which again deeply connects religion and the sea, in this case, the Judeo-Christian religion. The painting portrays the biblical scene where Jesus and his disciples are at sea in a fishing boat when a sudden storm rips their sail. Amidst all the chaos, only Jesus remains calm, telling them 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' and then rising to calm the fury of wind and waves. The painting pitches nature against human frailty –both physical and spiritual. The sea outburst creates commotion and terror in the disciples whose faces show the emotional impact this sudden change in nature has created in them, and those faces are greatly contrasted with the peaceful expression in the face of Jesus, who keeps calm, an example for Uxbal of how he must act in the face of his life's upheaval. We know from the beginning that Uxbal fears the deep sea. He tells Ana just before he dies that as a little child he used to listen to the noises of the sea waves on the radio, and that this scared him because he was always afraid of what lies beneath.

Bea, Uxbal's only Spanish friend in the film, is like the figure of Jesus in the painting, as she remains calm and helps him prepare for his transition to death. In this way, the film creates the idea of a general and common religious faith, not particularly Judeo-Christian or any other kind, but rather a universal quality of transcendent and unbounded religious experience, like 'the oceanic feeling' which Rolland describes as 'a sensation of "eternity"' (cited in Schneider and Berke 2008: 131). Freud understands the oceanic feeling as a feeling 'of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe' (1930: 68), whereas Milner calls it 'a sea of undifferentiated being' (1969: 29) and Werman 'the confluence of the inner and outer world' (1986: 125), (all cited in Shneider and Berke, 2008: 133).

Mill refers to Deweys' idea of how experience is aesthetic: when 'the aesthetics of living is enhanced with the religious encounter, this experience can be called beautiful – oceanic' (1999: 26). Uxbal's religious experiences throughout the film seems to proclaim that there is a personal and subjective religiosity, and that, as Mills states, '[r]eligion cannot stand for a single principle, because we all have differing susceptibilities of emotional excitement, [with] different impulses and inhibitions' (2011: 28), and therefore the religious sentiment cannot be judged under a criterion other than the 'personal subjective quality of the lived experience'. This idea binds together all human beings under the same religious, or oceanic, feeling, while at the same time this gives each one of us an individual and personal religious dimension according to our own experiences. This is to some extent a redistribution of the sensible insofar as the film represents the inner and outer world intimately connected with a sea of undifferentiated being in which all human beings participate. Thus he is giving religion, art, politics and ethics a stage from where they act as a golden thread that joins the characters in imagining a new way of being together in a constructed, collective and precarious existence, with the sea as the background, as the symbol of that distant, unknown and longed-for experience.

14.5 Gender and Ethnicity, the Accented Nature of Uxbal's On-Screen Family

Iñarritu expresses how his films 'create a triptych of stories which explore first at a local level, then foreign and finally global, the deep and complex relationships between parents and their children' (Iñarritu cited in Orellana, 2012: 1170). This is also the case in *Biutiful*, where all the individual stories are composed of families struggling to survive and be together. All families are perceived under the same light and with similar characteristics, despite their different countries of origin or their personal struggles. For example, the family men Uxbal, Ekweme and Liwei are all portrayed at some point around a table sharing and chairing family meals. In the case of Uxbal, the family break-up is due to Marambra's and Uxbal's diseases, the former mental and the latter physical. With the sweatshop owner, Liwei, the family meal is disrupted by the unexpected arrival of the father's lover, and Ekweme's deportation to Senegal means he will not share any more family meals with Ige and his son Samuel, and so all three families are broken in one way or another for reasons that seem beyond their control. Although the gender pattern seems at first conventionally patriarchal, with men dominating the story, presiding over the household and acting as breadwinners, at times they also appear to be spiritually weaker and with moral contradictions. All female characters, except Bea, are non-Spaniards and mothers of young children, but while Ige and Lili are always portrayed as responsible and loving mothers, carrying their children next to their bodies, Marambra represents a dysfunctional 'white' motherhood, as she is unable to find happiness and give her children what they need.

Iñarritu creates a dissensual film by means of the aesthetic and narrative characteristics of accented cinema, particularly through the use not only of transitional time and space, but also by the use of autobiography and through the expression of ethnic and social hybridity. Iñarritu conveys a highly hybrid film disseminating cultural, linguistic and ethnic ambiguities. The film is a co-production, the director is Mexican, characters are Spanish, Senegalese, Chinese, Latin American and Moroccan, and Uxbal's on-screen family is ethnically mixed, without any given explanation of how this could have happened. For example, the director himself is a Mexican of Basque descent and the name he gives to his main character, Uxbal, is a made up name but can be related to Basque male names like Unax, Urbez, Xabat. There is here, then, a clear intention to give an autobiographical tint to the male character, as the main focus of the story is Uxbal as a strong father, and as a son to a strong father as well, like Iñarritu's to whom he dedicates this film calling him 'my old oak tree'.

The role of Uxbal's father is played by Nasser Saleh, a Spanish actor of Moroccan descent, and Uxbal's daughter Ana is played by Hanaa Bouchaib, also of Maghrebian origin. Neither of the two resemble Uxbal physically, who has very strong facial features that contrast sharply with the much milder ones of his father in the film. The fact that the father is still in his twenties when we see him adds to the improbability of this kinship. This confuses once more the viewers' expectations, with no explanation forthcoming about how all this ethnic mixing has occurred. This unexplained mixing draws attention to the fluidity and hybrid nature of human beings and also to that of the national Spanish identity, which derives from many different sources, like both Uxbal and Iñarritu himself, with Spanish, Arab, Basque and Mexican descent in them.

The Mexican autobiographical element is also included through the Mexican Black Witch, a big black moth that Uxbal sees on his ceiling the day he finds out he is terminally ill. The number of moths grows as time goes by and Uxbal's illness worsens. According to Mexican culture, when there is sickness in a house and this moth enters the space of the home, it is believed the sick person will die. Thus, just seconds before Uxbal passes away, he can no longer see the moths, but instead he sees his father hanging to the ceiling. Since Uxbal's father migrated to Mexico, where he died, the moths could also be his spirit coming to collect Uxbal and take him to the other side. Thus when Uxbal dies, he meets his father who comes walking and smoking a cigarette in a snowy forest. There is again the same owl lying dead on the snow that appeared at the beginning of the film, and that now reminds us of Mateo's words.

As the emphasis is placed on the universalizing idea of the transient nature of human beings in this city but also beyond life, Iñarritu expresses and reinforces that equality in all human beings which is independent of their social conditions, class, religion, gender or ethnicity. By doing this, he also redistributes the sensible by showing how the representation of the precariat works as the visualization of their political agency, as they fight to negotiate their place and space in the city as well as being forced to be on the move in life and beyond. Through Uxbal, a hybrid character living in precariousness in a hybrid and liminal city, Barcelona becomes the space ruled by and experienced by a precariat that lives and dies on the move, and so, more importantly, the film expresses the idea that we are all precarious in a world where precariousness is no longer marginal but universal.

14.6 Conclusion

As Standing affirms, 'the evolution of the precariat as the agency of a politics of paradise is still to pass from theatre and visual ideas of emancipation to a set of demands that will engage the state rather than merely puzzle or irritate it' (2011: 3). *Biutiful* gives agency to the precariat by visualizing their struggles and representing them in a constructed solidarity under universal principles. The characters of *Biutiful* participate actively in demonstrating their equality and the social injustices they need to face on a daily day basis.

Iñarritu gives visibility to this environmental precariousness in Barcelona and connects the characters more powerfully with their natural surroundings. The film reflects the urban tension existing between the alienation and rupture of the bonds of humans from their natural surroundings and wildlife, while at the same time focusing on the necessity to re-establish this bond that has been broken by globalization and capitalism.

Biutiful is also relevant from the point of view of memory, class politics, identities and socio-economic and spatial changes taking place in a modern city. Unlike most common representations of migrants in Spanish fiction cinema, where they are often victimised or portrayed as minor subjects, *Biutiful* offers a post-migration alternative to these representation*s*. This film does not dwell on problems of integration, but instead the characters, mostly migrants, are agents of their own destinies whose depiction is not based on issues related to sympathy or otherness. Instead the viewer is challenged to engage with issues relating to life and death, sexuality and social and economic justice. In other words, *Biutiful* can be considered a post-

migrant film, as its characters are not restricted exclusively by their migratory conditions, but by their social and economic circumstances as individuals trying to challenge their own destinies for different reasons rather than specifically because of their migrant condition. In this way, they all become equals in a continuously changing world, where everything and everybody is transitional.

The film stays on the side of the precariat, and from within this group the otherwise invisible Barcelona becomes visible. Just as Uxbal's father comes to light, so do memories that can be related to Spain's historical and political past. That past is connected with the present and interweaves to expose and criticize the political circumstances that created that past, as well as those that are damaging this present: Franco's regime then, and globalization and capitalism now. Iñarritu's film describes a different side of Barcelona and makes the precariat characters primary in that description. This precariat is what Rancière calls 'the people', since 'a political subject is a capacity for staging scenes of dissensus' (2010: 69), and 'the generic name for all the subjects that stage such cases of verification is the *demos*, or the people' (2010: 70). For Rancière 'democracy is not the power of the poor, but the power of those who have no qualification for exercising power' (2010: 70). Thus the characters of *Biutiful* gain agency and the qualification for exercising power, the power to choose, to act and to make their struggles and precarious life visible, while they all become one equal group made up of individuals who fight to survive in the hostile environment of Barcelona.

Biutiful works as a tactical and dissensual vehicle opposing the strategies/consensus that generated, and keeps feeding, the idea of the Barcelona model/brand. It achieves this by means of the filmic elements and the narrative, universalizing human and natural common bonds, and by conferring visibility on the borders that globalization and gentrification processes impose on humans. The widespread dissemination that the film secured was thanks to a powerful institutionalized production and distribution system, which provided the film with a major global significance and potentially contributed to helping those marginal groups, including migrants as well as locals, who suffer the consequences of migration laws and urban planning, including, especially, gentrification projects.

However, the contradictions existing nowadays with media productions lead to some critics like Deleyto and López seeing *Biutiful* as part of the higher culture, as it became a product of consumption for the higher classes still selling the Barcelona trademark. *Biutiful* was generously funded by both Catalan and Spanish institutions. The production and distribution pattern of the film reveal 'an interest from local institutions in selling a certain globalized view of the city and ensuring the worldwide visibility of their product'. This visibility was even more guaranteed by the Oscar winning Spanish actor Javier Bardem, (Deleyto and López 2012: 159). Deleyto and López affirm that the film may not be the most obvious tool to use as an advertisement of the Barcelona trademark, but regardless of the story it tells, 'it ultimately feeds into the discourse of the modern global city and contributes to the visibility of Barcelona as an interesting and exciting destination for tourists, foreign investment and international cultural events' (2012: 172), but a sort of attraction for foreign investors to this city that could also may well be due to the way the film represents cheap and disposable labour.

15. General Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, I started with the aim of exploring the ways migrants in Spain were represented in eight films. I particularly wanted to analyse how and to what extent these films open the space for a contested and political debate, thus facilitating the creation of dissensus and helping to include the migrant characters as full political subjects regardless of their socio-economical status, their gender or their country of origin.

The analysis of the documentary films shows that the use of those characteristics of accented cinema, such as spatio-temporal and body transitional qualities, self-reflexivity and auto-biography create liminal spaces and characters where fluidity and change contribute to challenging rigid, hegemonic structures of power, thereby creating scenes of dissensus. The documentaries, especially those which show the space as contested between local and migrants and which offer the point of view of the migrants on the migrants' terms, present a more challenging portrayal of the reality of migration in the main Spanish cities at a moment of important migration changes and developments in Spain.

Barcelona is the city chosen by Guerín, Torres and Iñarritu and they all portray the space of the city as contested by marginal characters. Guerín transforms the symbolic tower of consensus represented in the building under construction and creates dissensus by means of the filmic treatment of El Raval and its people. Being a film contesting documentary techniques, it also challenges notions not only of fact and fiction, but also of society and politics, altering established rules regarding ways of seeing film and the world around us. Similarly, Torres offers scenes of dissensus by offering a view of Barcelona from the point of view of 'the other', thanks to her use of fragmented montage and the polysemy of migrant voices and faces as the central part of her documentary, where the characters make use of 'tactics' against the imposition of government 'strategies'. Madrid becomes the space of the documentaries filmed by Ramsis and Taberna, and they both offer an antagonistic portrayal of the quarter of Lavapiés.

Taberna focuses on Madrid as a multicultural space where female migrants are moving towards an ideal of Western womanhood that she herself comes to represent in the film. Taberna's documentary reinforces consensus rather than creating dissensus by proclaiming a model of multiculturalism that is restricted to the private sphere. As this model works well and does not present any problems, there is no need to make any changes as far as political equality is concerned, and so the status quo remains as it is. On the other hand, Ramsis creates a disunited polysemy of voices that clash with each other despite them all being part of the same struggle. While Torres created a constructed solidarity through montage, Ramsis stresses the lack of it. Both Torres and Ramsis are accented filmmakers who observe and represent the spaces of Barcelona and Madrid with the eyes of the other, inviting both national and migrant audiences to think about their own transitional position in their transitional spaces.

The fiction films demonstrate that generic conventions contribute to the maintenance of stereotypes and, more importantly, to the mechanisms that exclude and screen out migrants. These, conventions, therefore, reinforce the shrinkage of political space or consensus, which works against the dissensus, or breaking and disrupting those hierarchies of power and control over

migrants. Additionally these generic conventions prevent the migrant characters from acting as full political subjects, able to enact their rights as equals, since they are forced either to leave (Olga), or disappear (Milady), or to stay but with conditions imposed by the locals (Patricia, Leila and Jonny). The two Spanish female filmmakers, Bollaín and Gutiérrez also present migrants within a narrative logic that does not allow for political change or dissensus. The former through melodrama and the second through road movie elements, both reinforce the restoration of the status quo, instead of counteracting hierarchies of power. *Retorno a Hansala* places ethics at the core of the conflict between national and migrants, as does Pérez Rosado in *Agua con sal*, but while the former does not challenge the representation of Moroccans in Spanish cinema to the extent that it could mean a redistribution of the sensible, the latter works more as a critique of globalization and its effects on the lives of locals and migrants. However, in both of them, the characters are only left to act ethically, and there is therefore no space for any political consideration that can have an impact on the public sphere.

While most fiction films analysed in this thesis try to create portrayals of nice migrants, mainly female, in order to expose and criticize racism and xenophobic practices in Spain, they nevertheless tend to reinforce social conventions regarding race, gender and sex. Nice or positive images do not promote political change, since the films mostly focus on the private sphere and do not offer alternatives that look for changes in the public arena. Nevertheless, Iñarritu gives agency to the precariat by means of visualizing their struggles and representing them in a constructed solidarity under universal principles. Thus, he intervenes against the dominant branding processes of Barcelona as a model/trademark, creating a post-migrant film where the characters are not restricted exclusively by their migratory conditions, but by their social and economic circumstances, thus reinforcing their condition of equality as human beings who are not merely characterized by their condition of being migrants.

The outcome of this analysis takes us to a point where it is possible to imagine a brighter future in the representation of migrants in Spanish cinema. This post migrant cinema must advocate a representation where first and second generation migrants play an active role as full political subjects. Rancière asserts that 'human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric that defines this way of being together' and that 'politics is about the transformation of that sensory fabric of the "being together"' (2008: 4). In this sense, cinema can and must claim what for Rancière is this transformation, which also has very much to do with a distribution of the sensible (or dissensus), and that takes us to the aforementioned equality without conditions. As we have seen, those films that staged scenes of dissensus were those which exhibited characteristics found in accented cinema and displayed spatial and temporal representations that thwarted pre-established plans in favour of more liminal, fluid and inclusive spaces, therefore destabilising normative conventions, and challenging traditional ways of seeing and understanding self and other. In sum, the most dissensual films created the stage from where those who have no rights and no part in society could enact those rights and have a voice.

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